

EXPLAINING THE RISE OF A DYNASTIC PARTY IN INDONESIA: CASES OF PDIP AND *PARTAI DEMOKRAT*

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Political Science at the
Faculty of Social Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Rizky Adhyaksa

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

DEPOK

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ABSTRACT

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What causes the emergence of dynastic political parties? Dynasty-led parties are not uncommon in developing democracies such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and El Salvador. However, Indonesia had seen few examples of genuinely dynastic parties until the transformation of *Partai Demokrat* in 2020. Against this backdrop, this thesis aims to explore conditions under which political parties opt for dynastic leadership succession. By comparing *Partai Demokrat*, as a positive case of a dynastic party, and *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDIP), as a negative case, this research argues that electoral strategies employed by parties may shape the nature of factional disputes within the organization. In turn, factional disputes influence the likelihood of a hereditary succession within political parties. When factions compete for the party's top leadership position (i.e. first-tier factional dispute), the possibility of a dynastic succession is minimal. Conversely, when factions compete for anything other than the apex position (i.e. second-tier factional dispute), the possibility of a familial succession becomes more feasible. The evidence for this argument is mixed: the *Partai Demokrat* case supports the proposed mechanism, while the PDIP case presents a more complex picture that appears to challenge the framework. In conclusion, the model developed in this study must undergo further refinement to account for the unique dynamics within PDIP.

Keywords: *Dynastic party, elections, Indonesia, personalist party, political dynasty, political family, party factions, party leaders, political party*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

One day, I had a fascinating conversation with one of my professors, Pak Gde Dwitya Metera Arief. “Democratization is the ‘queen’ study of political science” he said. My readings soon confirmed the assertion, as I encountered volumes of work exploring what causes democracy to rise and fall, and what happens in either case. At that time, I was still planning to write on topics related to political economy. However, I took a detour and decided to write about something “genuinely” political for my master’s thesis.

The immediate question then was: “Alright, but what exactly should I study?” Studying democracy is certainly one option on the table, but it is such a large literature and I doubted I had the necessary time and resources to make a meaningful contribution. As I surveyed the field and began to grasp the nature of democracy, I came to realize that democracy is made up of parts. It is a distinct political regime, a distinct institution, but it is also a collection of institutions. The game in town is the election. It stands on the assumption of civil supremacy. It demands freedom of the press and expression. It also requires rule of law. And, the players are usually political parties. Each of these components has its own rich intellectual discussions.

Eventually, I chose to focus on political parties—an institution that I thought represents what a genuine political organization looks like. At first, I intended to research Internal Party Democracy (IPD). I wrote a proposal manuscript on the topic and presented it in the methodology class. However, I soon ran into a huge problem: I could not find a compelling puzzle on the topic. Any student working on a research proposal knows how important a research puzzle is. It is essentially the backbone of the research question. Pak Sirojuddin Arif, our head of the MA in Political Science, cannot stress this enough: “Asking the right question is already half of the research work.”

I was almost back to square one when Pak Philips Vermonte suggested that I explore the literature on party factions. That led me to insights on how factions compete for patronage resources and how they shape many facets within party life. Somewhere along the way, I stumbled upon Pradeep K. Chhibber’s work on Indian political parties—particularly his discussion of the prevalence and effects of dynastic parties. That single paper instantly became the foundation of my thesis, from which I built my main puzzle (this is all clear in the introductory chapter of my thesis). That is the origin story of this thesis, and I hope readers will find the discussions here insightful for understanding dynastic parties in Indonesia.

While only a partial requirement of the Master's program, a thesis is often considered as the last mile, and I agree. It reflects one's core interest in the discipline and offers experience in conducting research first-hand. It has truly been a journey; one I certainly couldn't have completed alone. My entire Master's experience was made possible by so many people, both related to academic and non-academic matters.

First and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude to the whole academic community of *Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia* (UIII) for giving me the opportunity to study political science under the guidance of exceptional scholars in their respective fields. It has been a true privilege because I could study on a full scholarship at this wonderful university. I was saddened to hear that funding for the scholarship scheme is running thin. Nevertheless, I still very much believe that the potential of this university is boundless, with the capacity to attract bright minds from every corner of Indonesia.

It was, then, my fiancée—now my wife—who first told me about UIII's scholarship. I still vividly remember that it was a Twitter post by Geger Riyanto endorsing UIII as a promising intellectual home for young aspiring scholars of Indonesia. At that time, I was living at my parents' house, applying to various study-abroad programs here and there. An application failure that I experienced back in 2022 left a deep mark. I am truly fortunate that my family's trust in me never waned, and they deserve special mention.

My mother, Sumiyarsih, has always supported me and believed that I would one day have the chance to pursue academia. My brother, Fachri Syahrazad, has been my partner in crime as we grew, laughed, and learned together. My dear wife, Nia Lavinia, never doubted me even during the darkest days and her encouragement is what keeps me going. Just to get to Depok back in September 2023, I struggled financially. Simply said, I did not have enough money to just even commute to my uni. Luckily, my uncle, Om Budi, became a source of kindness and generosity. I asked him to lend me some money, to which he gladly did. When I contacted him to return the deed, he declined. Truly, none of my academic achievements so far would have been possible without the support of my family. I know you guys don't ask for it, but I will return the favor, InshaAllah.

UIII has been an outstanding intellectual home—not only because of the faculty's well-designed programs—but also because of my fellow MA and PhD students. The lecturers and faculty staff have been very supportive, but the courses undoubtedly sharpened our analytical rigor. It really feels like studying abroad.

Some names undeniably stuck in my head. I have mentioned these names before, but they deserve re-mentioning. Pak Gde has been very generous with his time because,

apart from his classes, every coffee session with him felt like an extra class. Our dean, and at the same time my first thesis supervisor, Pak Philips, never fails to crack witty, yet smart jokes, whenever he has to address a large audience. Being one of his thesis disciples is one special thing. But what I am most proud of is when I could be in the same car with him en route to enjoy the legendary rock band God Bless in Gambir. Funny enough, it was actually Pak Siro who gave me his concert ticket. Pak Siro is the head of MA in Political Science. His Statistic course dispelled so many (unwarranted) myths about statistics. Thanks to him, I could understand the basics of regression analysis and no longer have to bash my head every time I read journals with regression tables. The fear of numbers, basically goes away.

I was supervised by Pak Philips and Pak Gde (the second supervisor). They patiently guided me in writing this thesis. Pak Siro was the chair of the examination panel and Pak Djayadi Hanan served as the examiner. Pak Djayadi's sharp questions and comments were nerve-wrecking, but I always looked forward to them. They saved me from logical loopholes, under-elaborated assertions, and unsupported arguments. For that, I owe them huge. I regret not to tell stories of other lecturers due to space limitation, but I attest that each has played an immense role in my intellectual journey.

I also took courses lectured by Pak Ridwan, Pak A'an Suryana, Pak Faisal Karim, and Prof. Farish Noor. I had my own personal stories with each of them, and I would like to recall a few as an expression of my gratitude. I served as Pak Ridwan's research assistant in my first and second semesters, helping with several of his projects. We also developed a research proposal for the Uni's research grant. Although we did not secure the funding, the process gave me immense insight of how scholars hunt research support.

Pak A'an is an exceptional scholar in his field. One time, he invited me to moderate a discussion of his newly published book—a task I gladly accepted. Participating in events like this has always been a pleasure for me. I also took his course on social movements and contentious politics, which made me reflect on my undergraduate activism years ago. I don't know how many times that I mumbled “ah, that make sense” during his class, recalling my days protesting in front of the rectorate building as a bachelor's student.

I had the pleasure of re-reading and re-understanding canonical papers and books on International Relations (IR) in my first semester. All of this, thanks to Pak Faisal Karim. IR subjects have a special place in my heart. After all, I am an IR graduate from *Universitas Brawijaya*. Coupled with the robust methodological training at UIII, I now understand how critically to evaluate IR theories such as, say, democratic peace theory—how to think about them, how to challenge them, and how to defend them. Pak Faisal is an absolutely

productive scholar. No doubt about it and I think everyone in the faculty would agree. It was also an honor to be part of the “Global South Forum” Project under the guidance of Pak Faisal, where even my small contributions helped amplify scholarly voices from the Global South.

In the second year, I had the pleasure to study with Prof. Farish. I first encountered him in the second semester during at the 2023 Southeast Asia Update. All FOSS students were required to attend. I arrived a bit late and sat at the back. The moderator handed the mic to someone and announced “Prof. Farish.” In an instant, I heard an Englishman speaking. His accent was quintessentially British, but his appearance is definitely Asian. I thought to myself, “who is this Asian Englishman?” Later did I realize he would be my lecturer.

I took Prof. Farish’s course in the second semester. He taught me and my mates the political history of Southeast Asian nations. He did not use power points at all. Only his words, a whiteboard, and a black marker. Listening to him was enough to pique our interest in the subject. I felt like I could hear him talk for hours. I owe him greatly for signing a recommendation letter for my doctoral scholarship application. Prof. Farish is a paragon, and I treasure every conversation I have had with him.

I did not get the chance to join classes taught by Pak Rifqi, Pak Afrimadona, and Bu Nia Deliana. However, they were the panel who interviewed me during the admission process—meaning they were the ones who granted me both the scholarship the opportunity to study here. An uncanny yet interesting coincidence.

My fellow Master’s and PhD students have been a source of joy and critical exchanges. Their company made hard times bearable and the good times even better. Loneliness is said to be the number one problem for those who do post-grad. Luckily, I barely felt it during my time at UIII, thanks to my perfect antidote: my classmates. Vaping/Smoking time is never complete without Zidan; studying Islam without Alfie feels like empty chatter or random yapping. Laughter was the main theme whenever I shared a table with Kamila, Nurul, Dayat, Fina, and Chaca. Many others left lasting impressions—memories I will forever cherish. Whether it is in the student room, at Bu Ning, or in Bang Syahrul’s coffee shop, every meeting was valuable.

Allow me to recount one crazy idea that we managed to realize. We held an electability survey for the student union election. The origin story of this crazy idea stemmed from a coffee table. Nurul took the lead role. I felt a bit guilty, because the project made her unable to sleep. We interviewed no fewer than 75 active students and published

our result just one hour before the university-wide voting began. The response? Praises and criticisms. Our prediction? Bull's eye. Finally, we tasted just a glimpse of what pollsters experienced during elections. We remain proud of our work and hope to put this knowledge to good use in the future.

Lastly, I would like to genuinely endorse my campus, as I believe that the establishment has an enormous potential. Studying at UIII far exceeded my prior expectations. New students may find the workload challenging—the endless reading lists, the weekly papers—but it is all worth it in the end. they pay off. Thank you, UIII. I hope one day I can return as an even better version of myself.

Depok, 12 August 2025

Rizky Adhyaksa

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

What causes a dynastic party to emerge? A notable number of parties in some developing democracies are organized mainly on kinship and familial relations. According to the literature, Latin America is a fertile ground for dynastic parties. In Colombia, party membership is often bequeathed to family members. Similarly, “party leadership is usually transmitted by kinship” (Oesterling in Martz, 1992, p. 96), making political leadership positions remain in the hands of a select number of families. In Nicaragua, a similar mode of party organization was reported by Carlos M. Vilas (1992). The Somoza Family largely governed the ruling party for 43 years (from 1936 to 1979). Dynastic parties also exist in Costa Rica and El Salvador (Vilas, 1992, p. 317).

Dynastic parties are also prevalent in South Asia. The glaring examples are the Indian National Congress (INC) Party in India (Chhibber, 2011) and the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) in Pakistan (Amundsen, 2013). The Nehru-Gandhi family runs one of the biggest and oldest party in India, starting from Indira Gandhi all the way to her grandson, Rahul Gandhi (Chhibber, 2011, p. 277). In Pakistan, the PPP party is led by the Bhutto clan. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari serves as the chairperson and is the son of the current president and previous PPP leader. Other major regional parties, specifically in Nepal and Sri Lanka, also confirm similar dynastic pathways. Nepal has the Nepali Congress (NC) Party, which is led by the Koirala family. At the same time, in Sri Lanka, there is the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), spearheaded by the Bandaranaike family (Amundsen, 2013).

In Indonesia, political families and dynasties hold considerable power both nationally and regionally. Yoes C. Kenawas (2023) has documented the rise of political dynasties in Indonesia and how such families can make “institutional drifts” within democratic institutions. However, political dynasties do not necessarily favor certain types of political parties. In certain cases, political parties do not really matter for dynasties so long as they can secure nomination from the party. This is evidenced by the practice of several political dynasties such as the Jayabaya clan in Lebak, Banten, and the Amur family in Pulang Pisau Regency, Central Kalimantan (Aspinall & As’ad, 2016). Members of these families are spread among different parties and they secure nominations from their respective political organization.

While the number of dynastic successions in public office is increasing (Kenawas, 2023), the number of dynastic successions in party leadership is next to none in Indonesia. Currently, only one party in Indonesia satisfies Chhibber's (2011) definition of a dynastic party: the Democratic Party or *Partai Demokrat* (PD). A dynastic party is "a party which has seen at least one or more successions that are all within a family and which result from the choice of a family member by the existing leader to be the next head of the party" (Chhibber, 2011, p. 278). Political families are prevalent within Indonesian political parties, such as the Soekarno Family in *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*, or PDIP, (Mietzner, 2012) and the Yasin Limpo clan in *Partai Nasional Demokrat* or Nasdem (Kenawas, 2015). However, only one family within one party successfully transferred the party's leadership from the existing leader to his close relative. In 2020, the party crowned Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (AHY)—the eldest son of the previous party's chairperson and a former President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY)—as the new chairperson (Partai Demokrat, 2020). The party is PD, while the family is the Yudhoyono clan. In short, PD is the only *de facto* and *de jure* dynastic party in Indonesia.

The term "dynastic party" is a relatively new concept in the study of political parties. Predeep K. Chhibber (2011) was the first to coin the term as an attempt to explain the prevalence of dynasticism within political parties—both local and national—in India. As a concept that intends to capture a distinct political phenomenon, 'dynastic party' is clear and solid. However, Chibber (2011) still could not provide a sufficient theory that can explain *why* dynastic parties emerge in the first place. Chibber (2011) argued that dynastic parties spring into existence due to two factors: weak internal organization and centralized party financing. The problem with this theory is that those very same features can also be found in a "personalist party." Most definitions of personalist parties put forward the idea that such a party functions as a vehicle for advancing the leader's political career, and the leader controls more resources and decisions than other party officials. When a leader commands a sizeable power within a personalist party, it is mostly acquired at the expense of party institutionalization, making the party organizationally weak (Gunther & Diamond, 2003; Ignazi, 1996; Kostadinova & Levitt, 2014).

It is possible to argue that before becoming dynastic, a party will have to experience a certain degree of personalization. This is in line with Budiatri (2018), as she argues that a personalist party has the propensity to strengthen dynasticism within the internal working of its own organization. Such patterns are true in the case of INC in India, PPP in Pakistan, and PD in Indonesia. However, this realization cannot answer *when* and

why a personalist party transforms into a dynastic one. The same puzzle can be framed as follows: why do some parties remain personalist while others become dynastic?

In Indonesia, personalist parties are not uncommon. Parties that qualify this conceptualization are *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (PKB), *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan* (PDIP), *Partai Nasional Demokrat* (Nasdem) and *Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya* (Gerindra). Amongst the four parties listed, PDIP is the most dynastic prone (Mietzner, 2016). Table 1.1 reports the list of dynastic and personalist parties in Indonesia.

Table 1. 1
Dynastic and Personalist Parties in Indonesia

Political Party	Name of the Leader	Tenure Period	Preceded by	Important Notes on the Current Leadership	Party Species
<i>Partai Keadilan Bangsa</i> (PKB)	Muhaimin Iskandar	2005-Present	Matori Abdul Djalil, Alwi Shihab (2002-2005)	Alleged intervention from Yudhoyono's administration (Rizki, 2023).	Personalist Party
<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan</i> (PDI-P)	Megawati Soekarnoputri	1998-Present	None	No party election in the 2019 congress, only <i>Aklamasi</i> or coronation. Many expect Megawati to pass the baton to her daughter, Puan Maharani.	Personalist Party

Political Party	Name of the Leader	Tenure Period	Preceded by	Important Notes on the Current Leadership	Party Species
<i>Partai Demokrat</i> (PD)	Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (SBY's Son)	2020-Present	Budhisantoso; Hadi Utomo; Anas urbaningrum; Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2015-2020)	With the coronation of Agus Yudhoyono as the new PD leader, the party transformed from a personalist to dynastic party.	Dynastic Party
<i>Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya</i> (Gerindra)	Prabowo Subianto	2009-Present	None	Founded in 2008. Nominated Prabowo for Vice President once in 2009 and President three times.	Personalist Party
<i>Partai Nasional Demokrat</i> (Nasdem)	Surya Paloh	2013-Present	Patrice Rio Capella (2011-2013)	From 2013, Paloh secured the leadership position in three congresses through	Personalist Party

Political Party	Name of the Leader	Tenure Period	Preceded by	Important Notes on the Current Leadership	Party Species
				<i>aklamasi</i> (coronation).	

* Synthesized from several sources.

Table 1.1 rules out other types of parties, namely movement party, catch-all party, and religious party.¹ The reason for this is to isolate and compare different trajectories taken by personalist parties. Prior to becoming dynastic, one important pathway that a party might experience is personalization. When the party is personalized, the party leader has more space to install family members in strategic positions within the party. Therefore, any personalist party has the potential to become a dynastic party.

The case of PD, however, is somewhat puzzling for several reasons. The first reason is because there are other parties that are very prone to become a dynastic party, yet remain personalistic—which is an accurate description for PDIP. Parties like *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan* (PDIP) and *Partai Nasional Demokrat* (Nasdem) are fine candidates for the next dynastic parties. I call them “candidates” because close relatives of party leaders in these organizations assume strategic positions within the party. Currently, Nasdem and PDIP are effectively personalistic parties.

PDIP is a prominent case of a party which is dominated by a political family at the national level (Mietzner, 2012). The party’s chairwoman, Megawati Soekarnoputri, has led the party since 1999. Her eldest daughter, Puan Maharani, is the chairperson of the House of Legislative Assembly and the head of the political bureau of PDIP (Dewi, 2024). Mietzner (2012) also argued that PDIP cadres support dynasticism from within the party (p. 528). With such conditions, PDIP should have been the first dynastic party in Indonesia, but it wasn’t.

¹ In Indonesia, *Partai Keadilan Bangsa* or PKS might be regarded as a movement party. While behaviorally ambiguous, *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* or PPP is widely viewed as a religious party due to its historical root. *Partai Golongan Karya* or Golkar neatly fits the category of catch-all party.

Another reason to consider the puzzle of the birth of dynastic party in Indonesia is the case of PD's internal dynamics. The fact that there were times where the Yudhoyono Family could not exert full control of the party signals that there is a force that could deter the influence of a strong man in his/her own personalist party. Identifying this "force" is pertinent in the study of party behavior because it might serve as a determinant factor that changes party types (e.g. from personalist to catch-all or dynastic). So long as this determinant "force" is unrecognized, a regularity of party behavior or party change can never be fully understood. The story of PD's internal dynamics can add weight to my contention.

As indicated by Table 1.1, PD used to be led by a non-Yudhoyono Family member. Observers regarded the party as a mere "vehicle party" for SBY to run for the 2004 presidential election, especially within the early years of the party development (Honna, 2012). However, SBY himself was oddly detached from his own party during most of his presidency, leaving the leadership position open for competition (Fionna & Tomsa, 2020, p. 48). This does not mean that the Yudhoyono family never exerted influence on PD's chairmanship, as they managed to install Hadi Utomo (SBY's brother-in-law) as the head of the party from 2005-2010. But despite their considerable influence within the party, the victory of Anas Urbaningrum demonstrated that the family does not always possess full control of the party. Echoing Honna's (2012) main contention, the internal dynamics of PD reflect a more nuanced understanding beyond a shared notion of PD being a vehicle party.

The trajectory of leadership succession in PD is puzzling because it seems that there is no regularity. PD was a very dynamic party prior to the ascend of SBY in the leadership position. There were no projections that SBY's sons, Edhie Baskoro Yudhoyono (Ibas) and AHY, would assume the leadership position in the party. AHY had a bright military career (Meliana, 2025), while the popularity of Ibas was damaged by the Hambalang case (Tempo.co, 2021). Therefore, understanding the factor that guides the regularity of party's behavior is critical to uncover the regularity of party behavior and change.

The third piece of the puzzle is the degree of similarities between PD and other personalist parties in Indonesia. Most personalist parties are, with the exception of PKB, ideologically nationalist. Golkar is another nationalist party that is not dynastic and, at the same time, not personalistic like PDIP. Hence, it would be futile to attribute the rise of dynastic parties to ideological reasons. Institutional considerations also cannot explain the birth of a dynastic party in Indonesia. Every major party has to compete within the same

institutional setting that provides the same reward-punishment logic. In Indonesia, the law on election and the law on political party has the tendency to facilitate party personalization (Nuryanti, 2018). However, while an institutional logic might explain personalization of political parties, it will not be able to explain the move from personal to familial mode of party organization.

One might argue that PDIP, NasDem, and Demokrat are all the same because they all engage in dynastic politics, meaning leaders of those parties are preparing to install a family member as their successor. There lies an important assumption behind this argument: familial succession is not important and parties should be regarded as dynastic when they show signals of dynastic-building tendencies even when a family-based succession is failed or haven't occurred. This argument can render the puzzle I framed irrelevant as it shifts the essence of dynasticism to the *process* of dynastic building and not the *result*. The problem with this argument is that it precisely renders dynastic succession unimportant. The main goal of dynastic-building is ultimately familial succession. Hence, "rewarding" parties that are still trying to make such successions with the label "dynasty" might defeat the purpose dynasticism. Having said that, the definition that I choose focuses on the *result* of the party's leadership succession. Granted, this definition does not capture the *process* of dynasticism. However, it provides a much clearer conceptualization of party types, while defining parties based their tendencies toward dynasticism is much trickier. I am well aware of the trade-off and I deliberately choose a more established definition by Chhibber (2011).

For the reasons I laid out above, this study aims to reveal the rationales behind party-type variations between PDIP, a personalist party, and PD, a dynastic party. PDIP is selected to be compared to PD because it is the most likely candidate for a dynastic party. However, PDIP was preceded by PD. Up until 2025, AHY will still assume leadership in PD. On the other hand, Megawati recently openly proclaimed that she will still secure her chair(wo)manship within her party (Fadilah, 2024). In addition to the similarities above, the two parties share another resemblance: leaders of both parties had assumed Indonesia's presidency. Megawati assumed office from 2001 to 2004, while SBY served as Indonesia's president from 2004 to 2014.

1.2 Research Question

The previous section problematizes the transformation of the PD party from a personalist party to a dynastic one. There is a 4 years-gap between PD and PDIP. In this study, the case of PDIP serves as the negative case (i.e. a party that does not turn dynastic),

while PD serves as the positive case (i.e. the one that becomes a dynastic party). Against this backdrop, I propose the following question:

“Why did *Partai Demokrat* become a dynastic party in 2020, while *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan* remains a personalistic party prior to 2025?”

Here, I would like to add one additional note. The time limitation in the research question is important because I acknowledge that parties in Indonesia can transform relatively quickly. This is coupled with the fact that both parties are preparing to hold national congresses around the time of writing this thesis (Fajri, 2025; Anggrainy, 2025). This way, any changes during the time of writing will not affect the internal validity of the research.

1.3 Why Study Personalistic and Dynastic Political Parties in Indonesia?

Studying party types is important, and the cases I outlined in the previous section yield real-world significance, especially for those who are concerned with democracy. Some studies have alarmed the influence of certain party types on democratic quality. Chibber (2011) has found that competition among dynastic parties produced a higher degree of “party system instability” and a political “representation deficit” (p. 291). Personalist parties also have their fair share of deficiencies. Li & Wright (2023) recently contended that democratic leaders supported by such a party have a proclivity to undermine impartial state administration. Hence, my main point is as follows: if the effects of certain party types is important, then understanding conditions in which those party types emerge are also important.

Another facet of studying party types, especially personalist and dynastic parties, is that they inform about the nature of party leadership selection. Some scholars who study party leadership selection have noted that contributions in this field are fairly limited (Aylott & Bolin, 2020; Pilet & Cross, 2015; Cross & Blais, 2012). This is an odd revelation, because party leaders usually hold significant power. In many countries, occupying a leadership position means getting closer to becoming the head of the state. Leadership position also commands important prerogatives like minister selection (Dowding & Dumont, 2009) and candidate selection (Hazan & Rahat, 2010). Most notably, party leaders are the face or image of the party (Darmawan, 2018). An appealing party leader may positively influence the party’s electoral performance (Pilet & Cross, 2015). In short, since a party leader holds a considerable political influence, it is crucial to understand certain political conditions that allow him/her to be selected.

Why Indonesia? The transformation of PD is the first instance of the emergence of a dynastic party in Indonesia. Historically, Indonesia was and is a host of parties of all kinds, including mass-based party, religious-based parties, catch-all parties, personalist parties, and programmatic parties. Instances of such parties are quite often in Indonesia, especially personalist parties (see Amalia & Romli, 2018). Meanwhile, other scholars have discussed the phenomenon of dynastic parties in other parts of the globe (Chibber, 2011; Ziegfeld, 2016; Amundsen, 2013). This is why, I argue, examining the pathways of familial succession in Indonesian parties is important.

This research aims to make a theoretical contribution that can explain how personalist parties can transform into a dynastic one. The framework I developed in chapter two attempts to make an informed prediction regarding familial succession of Indonesian parties. To be perfectly clear, I have no ethical predisposition on party types. The result of this research might be useful for activists, politicians, and bureaucrats who aim to prevent dynasticism in political parties. They might advocate certain regulations or adjust their political strategy accordingly. However, it can also inform would-be dynasts on how to attain hereditary succession within parties or weaken party institutionalization. The ethical value of dynastic parties is beyond the scope of this research (I will leave this task to political or moral philosophers).

1.4 The Structure of the Thesis

The following is the way in which this thesis is organized. Chapter 1 describes the puzzling transformation of PD from a personalistic party into a dynastic one. It also contends that the case of PD should be compared with PDIP as a party that is known for being dominated by the Soekarno family but has yet to become organizationally dynastic. Supplementing the importance of the research question, this section argues that understanding the rise of dynastic parties in Indonesia is critical due to the effects that such parties could have (see Chhibber, 2011 and Chandra, 2016).

The second chapter consists of a literature review, theoretical framework, and potential novelty of this study. The main aim of the literature review is to situate this study within the gap in the literature. I show that the study of dynastic parties situates itself at the intersection of party models, factionalism, and organization, in-depth case studies of parties in question, and political dynasties. The chapter also details the theory to explain the emergence of dynastic parties in the context of the succession crisis of personalistic parties. It also explains how I operationalize the theory since it demands data that is known to be hard to get, especially when dealing with Indonesian political parties. I argue that the

concept of a dynastic party is a relatively new idea, and more specifications and conceptual clarifications are required to get it off the ground.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology of this thesis. I employ the most similar system design (MSSD) to compare the party's model of PD and PDIP. This section also provides a justification for why PD and PDIP are selected as the cases. Chapter 3 also discusses the way in which I collect and analyze the data to infer the reason(s) behind PD's transformation into a dynastic party and PDIP's stagnation in its personalistic form of organization.

Chapter 4 demonstrates the trajectory of the two parties within a changing landscape of Indonesian politics. This section is largely descriptive in the sense that it describes how both organizations develop. A comparative analysis, which discusses whether the hypothesis is confirmed or disconfirmed, between the two parties is provided at the tail-end of this chapter. Chapter 5 serves as conclusion which largely discuss the summary of and limitations surrounding this project.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Answers on the Cause of Dynastic Parties: A Literature Review

Questions surrounding dynastic parties, their causes and effects to democracy, have gained traction from scholars dedicating their work studying political parties in South Asian nations. While their contributions to the literature have been invaluable, some works on theorizations still need to be done. As I have argued in the previous section, current theories on do not provide a satisfying answer to the questions of dynastic party emergence in the Indonesian context.

Perhaps it is safe to say that Chhibber (2011) is the first pioneer to theorize the cause of dynastic parties. He proposes two sets of arguments: weak organization and centrally organized party finance. Dynastic parties have two organizational characteristics. Firstly, the absence of independent organization of the party. Independent organization means a framework to which “a politician can be elected independently of party leader” (Chhibber, 2011, p. 282). If the party organization is not independent of the party leader, then contestations for the leadership position are less likely to emerge. Secondly, the absence of an independent civil society association that the party depends upon to mobilize electoral support. Such an association can exert control over the behavior of the party leader. Chhibber (2011) puts forward the case of Trade Unions and their influence on the British Labour Party as an example that a civil society association can provide an effective check and balances against party leaders. Thus, the absence of independent organization and civil society are what make up a weak party organization. The last claim is how the party raise and distribute financial aids to their cadres/politicians during election. He claims that it would be difficult “for an individual politician to mount an independent campaign for power or to challenge leadership” if the party raises and distributes money centrally (Chhibber, 2011). This is true in the case of Congress Party in India.

While Chhibber’s (2011) theory might be true in the case India, it does bear some problems. The first problem is, as I have shown argued in the introduction of this study, every characteristic that dynastic parties might possess can also inhibit personalist parties. It is plausible that these kinds of parties share the same characteristic, but the theory does not explain when and why a personalist party can transform into a dynastic one. The second problem is more methodological and that is endogeneity. Using surveys from party cadres, Chhibber (2011) shows that cadres of dynastic parties are more likely to say that their

parties have weaker organization. However, it is not clear where the arrow of causation points out, since it is possible that dynastic parties cause weak organization.

Studying the same topic for Bangladeshi parties, Inge Amundsen (2013) finds several factors for the cause of party dynasticism. There are at least three factors. Firstly, dynastic families' willingness to hold on to power within the party. Secondly, factions within the party "prefer an undisputed leadership" (Amundsen, 2013, p. 9). Thirdly, because parties view dynasticism as a great strategy for party branding and gaining votes, especially in an environment where party programs are hard to discern from one another and feudal culture is still prominent.

In my view, there are two problems with Amundsen's study. One, it does not provide a ready-made hypothesis to explain the emergence of other dynastic parties in other national-contexts. There are three candidate variables, but it is rather unclear how these variables interact with one another. The second problem is methodological in that he uses two positive cases to confirm his findings, but does not exercise the theory to account for negative cases. The problem is exacerbated with the variety of political parties in Bangladesh, dynastic and non-dynastic alike. Arguments based on environmental factors can no longer hold. For instance, if it is true that Bangladeshi prefer feudal leadership, we would expect that all or almost all parties in Bangladesh to be dynastic. However, this is not the case.

Of the most recent studies on dynastic parties, Ambar Kumar Ghosh (2023) provide an interesting typology of dynastic party. While the initial conceptualization was pioneered by Chhibber (2011), Ghosh offers a more discreet categorization. According to him, there are two kinds of dynastic parties: *dynasty by practice* and *dynasty by design*. The former refers to parties that are not originally founded on the basis of a single leader, but turn dynastic later in party's life when certain conditions are met. The later refers to parties that are formed for dynastic control since the moment of inception.

Can Ghosh's (2023) insights answer the question put forward in this research? I would say no and there are two reasons. Firstly, it is hard to categorize PDIP and PD according this conceptualization. Secondly, this distinction only useful to compare two unquestionable dynastic parties. However, as I have argued previously, PDIP should not be regarded as a dynastic party because it hasn't made a dynastic succession.

Previous answers do not provide a ready-made analytical toolkit to compare PDIP and PD. For this reason, I consult other studies relevant to the question at hand. Essentially, the study can be confined to the field of party types. However, understanding why parties

behave the way they do requires one to consult other fields of inquiry. These are studies on political dynasticism, party factionalism, leadership selection, and case studies of parties under examination—in this case, PD and PDIP.

Research on political dynasties experienced a rather recent development due to the pioneering work of Dal Bo et al., (2009). They showed that MP in America is an occupation with the most “dynastic bias”, meaning that the proportion of legislators who had parents who were legislators is higher compared to other occupations like economists, dentists, doctors, and carpenters. They also found the longer a person sits in the legislator's seat, the likelihood of his/her relative occupying the same position increases. In Dal Bo’s terms, “power begets power” (Dal Bo et al., 2009, 116). However, this conclusion is being challenged.

A recent study conducted by Jon H. Fiva and Daniel M. Smith (2018) seems to demonstrate that simply winning an election does not necessarily increase the probability of a family member winning future seats. Winning an election does increase the chance for a re-incumbency, but it does not have a meaningful relationship for dynasty building. There is a caveat, however. The study used Norway as a case study, and the country used a closed-list PR electoral system. This means political parties hold a strong grip on candidacy. This also means rank-and-file members of the party will work hard to prevent the rise of dynasticism within the party.

In the case of Indonesia, political dynasties managed to harness the country’s unique institutional development to accumulate power. Kenawas' (2023) explanation of the rise of dynastic politicians in Indonesia relies heavily on institutionalist premises. Direct elections at the local level have allowed local dynasties to build and maintain their familial power bit by bit. The long tenure of governorship or mayorship allows dynastic politicians to never run out of resources. In other words, local elites have found a way to exploit the system of local democracy, which allows them to utilize political positions to strengthen their family’s political power.

While research on political dynasties has shown significant contributions, little can be said about dynasties within political parties. This is because dynasts often contest for public office positions like mayors or governors (Kenawas, 2023). However, fierce political competitions within political parties show that party leadership is as valuable as any politically contested public office, be it in the executive or legislative. Unfortunately, as important as it may seem, intra-party competitions often occur under the public’s radar.

The inquiry of dynastic parties also interacts with the study of species of political parties. As a matter of fact, Chhibber (2011) builds the idea of dynastic parties after examining the inadequacies of the political party's typology developed by Gunther and Diamond (2003). Political parties that are led by a political dynasty do not fit Gunther and Diamond's classification. This warrants the need for a new conceptualization. Dynastic parties, especially the ones that have scored successful electoral performance, can be thought of as a cross breed of three party types: "mass party," "personalistic party," and a small element of "elite-based party." It has a shred of "mass party" because it can secure a relative electoral victory to stay in the parliament. In a sense, they can appeal to a lot of people, but they are not built bottom-up like a mass party would be. Dynastic parties also contain an element of a "personalistic party," but even after the person (usually the party chair) gives up the position, the organization stays alive. Finally, an element of "elite-based" party exists with one important distinction: the elite is the family (Chibber, 2011, pp. 278-279).

The study of party factions is another area worth consulting because dynastic succession means successfully neutralizing the threat of opposing factions within the party. Chhibber (2011) found that politicians or cadres belonging to dynastic parties declare that their parties are more faction ridden. Regarding factionalism in Indonesia, recent scholarship has identified several determinants of factionalism, ranging from institutions, party financing, historical legacies, party systems, and party types (Chambers & Ufen, 2020). Hicken and Tan (2020) acknowledge several other specific causes, such as regime type, social structure and cleavages, and party leadership selection. In Indonesia, social cleavages used to be an essential ingredient for producing programmatic or ideological factions. However, recent developments show that factionalism within parties today is mainly driven by clientelism and patronage, with only weak to moderate influence on intra-party dynamics (Fionna & Tomsa, 2020).

Despite efforts to theorize factionalism in Indonesia, the literature suffers from a major drawback: the lack of clear evidence on who the factional players are. Take, for example, the article written by Fionna and Tomsa (2020). They only mentioned prominent factional players within the Golkar party while being reluctant to call out names of those competing in Islamist parties (PAN, PKB, and PKS) and factions competing for second-tier positions in personalist parties (Gerindra, NasDem, PD, and PDIP). This lack of evidence suggests the nature of the internal workings of political parties in Indonesia: confidentiality. Epistemically, parties seem to be a black box, and studying factional competition within parties requires methodological and theoretical breakthrough.

The discussion on the internal workings of parties in question—PDIP and PD—has made important contributions in explaining the rise of dynastic parties. Mietzner (2012) assessed how PDIP defies the expectations of most scholars who evaluate party politics in young democracies. Unlike other scholars who contend that party politics in Indonesia are ideologically hollow and disconnected from the society, Mietzner (2012) argued that PDIP has a strong institution and a clear linkage to its large constituencies. In terms of internal organization, PDIP is interesting. At his time of writing (and until now), Megawati had maintained her position as party chairperson for more than 10 years while suffering losses from two presidential elections. Megawati’s charisma and organizational craftsmanship in neutralizing sharp inter-factional war allowed her to sustain the leadership position within the party (Mietzner, 2020).

Mietzner (2016) came close to answering why Megawati did not elect her own off-springs² to be the torch bearer of the Soekarno Dynasty and the new PDIP leader. According to several interviews with senior party leaders and confidential informants, Mietzner concluded that Megawati was well aware of her descendants’ shortcomings. Megawati does hope that the party will be led by one of her descendants; however, “these expectations have been mostly disappointing” (Mietzner, 2016, p. 362). Mietzner’s (2016) account on why Megawati hasn’t passed the torch revolves around her concern on qualities that neither Puan nor Prananda possess.

There are two problems with this explanation. One, comparing leadership and political craftsmanship of Megawati’s and SBY’s descendant is problematic due to the absence of clear measurement. Puan has been a politician since 2009, while AHY was still in the military up until 2016. If any, Puan should have inherited PDIP prior to AHY’s ascendancy as PD leader. The second problem arises when one accepts Mietzner’s (2016) explanation at face value. It might be a coincidence that Megawati distrusts her descendants, while SBY trusts his. The arbitrary nature of such an explanation is, I submit, problematic because no theoretical regularity could be drawn.

Jun Honna (2012) provides an important study that depicts the internal working of PD. The party received little scholarly attention due to its commonly held “status” as a personalistic party under the monopoly of SBY. Honna (2012, p. 486) argued that this view is misleading, if not wrong. Inside the party, there were factional conflicts and ‘dirty war’

² Megawati is known to have three children: Puan Maharani, M. Prananda Prabowo, and Mohamad Rizki Pratama. Many considered Puan to be the torch bearer. However, until now, PDIP’s matriarch still has not budged. For the two other siblings, Prananda Prabowo is deeply unpopular, while Rizki Pratama is not interested in politics. See Mietzner (2016).

among the party elites for the leadership position. The 2010 congress was particularly interesting because it shows how even the President's man (Andi Malarangeng) could not secure a majority vote and had to lose to Anas Urbaningrum. Looking back at PD before its scandalous corruption cases, it is hard to imagine that the party would walk down the path of dynasticism. Thus, revisiting the golden age of PD does not provide a viable answer.

While the study of political dynasties and political parties yields important insights, it does not directly answer the question of why PD is taking a dynastic path. PDIP still refrains itself from becoming a dynastic party, and little scholarly attention has been paid to this particular phenomenon. Studies on political dynasties can only reveal important indicators of what drives dynasticism within public offices, but not political parties. It also offers little attention to the relationship between political parties and dynasticism.

Previous research on PD and PDIP cannot satisfactorily account for the question at hand because, historically, there were no signs that PD would be dynastic. If Puan is considered incapable of being the PDIP chairperson, then AHY, the chairperson of PD, should be considered even worse. Drawing from the studies above, I argue that the question I raise in this proposal is yet to be answered.

2.2 Conceptual Clarity and Variations in the Outcome of Interest

This section discusses several concepts that are pertinent to this research: dynastic party. *Prima facie*, the concept mixes two distinct terms, namely political party and dynasty. Understanding these seemingly distinct terms, as well as referring to at which point the two merged into one, is central for this research. To be more specific, four concepts deserve clarification. The first two are rather similar, namely *political family* and *political dynasty*. The rest two derive from the universe of political party species, namely personalist party and dynastic party.

Political Family and Political Dynasty

It is important to spell out the concept of political family and political dynasty understood in this thesis. I adopt the definition of *political family* and *political dynasty* from Aspinall and Asad (2016). The former refers to a family where more than one member gains elected or appointed political positions. For instance, a brother is a governor, while a sister is a member of the national parliament.

A political family transforms into a political dynasty “only when it is able to extend its power temporarily so that once the dynasty's founder loses office, he or she is succeeded by a family member” (Aspinall & Asad, 2016, p. 3). The succession can be intra- or inter-

generationally. Intra-generational succession is when the person who holds the office/position in question is succeeded by a family member within the same generation (e.g. a brother or spouse). Inter-generational succession is when the succession involves a family member from a different generation.

This differentiation is important because the key to dynastic politics is political succession by a relative of the same family since it displays the resiliency of the political family to safeguard a political position. A political family might pursue dynastic building for many reasons. Aspinall & As'ad provide two approaches that might explain the reason why some political families pursue dynasticism. One reason, as argued by the opportunity structure approach, states that dynasticism emerges because of the absence of constraints. Another reason treats dynastic building as a matter of strategy for acquiring or retaining power (Aspinall & As'ad, 2016, pp. 5-6).

Personalist Party and Dynastic Party

The study of party types is an ever-growing field of inquiry. One of the most comprehensive studies on party types is published by Gunther & Diamond (2003) in which they proposed 15 'species'³ of political party. Amongst the 15 party types, personalist party is listed, while dynastic party isn't. Even then, the concept of personalist party requires further specification.

The sole goal of a personalistic party is to act as a "vehicle for the leader to win an election and exercise power" (Gunther & Diamond, 2003, 187). Its electoral appeal and source of party management is the personal charisma of the leader. Paraphrasing Panebianco (1988), loyalty to the leader is the organizational glue of the party. Following the publication of Gunther & Diamond (2003), scholars began to scrutinize party types and provide a deeper conceptualization (Kostadinova & Levitt, 2014; Calise, 2015; Kefford & McDonnell, 2018; Frantz et al., 2021; and Rahat, 2024).⁴ This research will employ the one developed by Kostadinova & Levitt (2014). The rationale for choosing their concept could not be fully explained here. For now, suffice to say that their concept is parsimonious and employable.

Kostadinova & Levitt (2014) define "personalist party" as a party that has a dominant leader and a weakly structured organization. Dominant leader refers to the idea that the party exists for the leader's cause. The party can either be created by the leader or

³ For clarity, I will use the term 'party types.'

⁴ To make matters clear, scholars working in this topic come up with similar terms such as 'personal', 'personalistic', and 'personalist' all of which denote the same thing.

simply taken over by him/her. The leader may be charismatic (in the Weberian sense) or non-charismatic (most plausible is in a patron-client sense). The power of the leader is far reaching such that the leader “has more control over the party than do other senior party elites” (Frantz, et al., 2021, p. 7). An important indicator would be the sole authority to decide matters regarding nominations, appointment, and policies.

A weakly structured organization refers to the inability of the party to make important decisions without the approval of the leader. At the same time, it points to “a lack of intraparty democracy.” In the case where the leader takes over an existing party, the inherited structure and institutions will be gradually weakened. This exact process can be dubbed as a personalization of a party.

As with political dynasty, party dynasticism is only in effect when the party leader is succeeded by a family member of the previous party leader (Chhibber, 2011). In contrast to the personalist party, dynastic party demonstrates the power of a political family dominating the party. Meanwhile, personalist party may or may not be dominated by a political family. This is true at least for personalist parties in Indonesia. For instance, Gerindra is a personalist party in which the influence of Prabowo’s relatives is questionable. In contrast, PDIP and NasDem are dominated by their respective leader’s family.

The Relationship between Familial and Party Politics

What is the relationship between political family, dynasty, and party? In line with Kumar Ghosh’s (2023) assertion, a political dynasty and a dynastic party are different political units. The former focuses on families as the political unit, while the later focuses on political parties. In Indonesia, a dynastic family has a complex, yet interrelated ties with a political party. A family with political motives should secure nominations from political parties in order to contest for election or to acquire non-elected political positions such as ministerial positions, special staffers, and appointed advisors. This institutional arrangement incentivizes political families to assert dominance over political parties, either by creating a new political party or taking over an existing one.

The ‘dominance’ usually manifests in the form of multiple family members occupying many vital positions in the party, with the most charismatic and skillful member of the family assuming the leadership post in the party. However, merely a dominant position does not make a party dynastic. It is only after a succession of the leadership post by a chairperson’s relative that a party transforms into a dynastic one. These are the key

features that significantly differentiate personalist parties from dynastic parties. Table 2.1 summarizes variations of the outcome of interests, as well as the cases.

Table 2. 1
Variations of the Dependent Variables

Party Type	Key Features	Cases
Personalist Parties	1. May or may not be dominated by a political family/dynasty; 2. No familial succession of the leadership post.	PDIP
Dynastic Parties	1. Dominated by a political family/dynasty; 2. Familial succession.	Demokrat

The main question raised in this research is, to put it technically, under what condition(s) do personalist parties transform into a dynastic party? Put it in another direction: Under what condition(s) does such a party remain personalist? My argument builds on several pieces of literature concerning party behaviors, electoral performance, and party factionalism. In the next section, I start by discussing some theoretical assumptions, particularly the meaning of factional competition for dynastic and personalistic parties. Then, I proceed to provide a full explanation of the pathways from personalistic to dynastic parties.

2.3 Theoretical Argument

Firstly, I contend that the transformation of a personalist party into a dynastic one signals the absence of a capable contender who can compete for the party leadership post. A political family and its loyalists can be understood as a faction that sometimes engages in a factional conflict within the party. Fionna and Tomsa (2020) made a rather interesting observation about the nature of factional competition within Indonesian political parties. They found that there are two kinds of factional disputes: first-tier and second-tier factional competition. The former denotes a competition that is actually made for the contestation of the chairmanship and every authority associated with the position. The latter is the same except that the prize of the dispute is not the chairmanship position and, of course,

possesses less potent influence and authority. Therefore, one of the reasons why a dynastic party emerged is that, internally, there is no faction(s) strong enough to contest in the first-tier division.

I have briefly discussed the nature of party factionalism in Indonesia. Programmatic or ideological factions play little role in shaping party dynamics. Today, factional battles are fought by groups primarily organized through means of patronage. This means, any capable contender for contesting in a first-tier factional competition must secure a wealth of political, and perhaps economic, resources to build a strong web of patronage. If the assumption is valid thus far, then it is important to form an explanation for the emergence of different factional disputes within personalist parties. In the context of a succession crisis and electoral stagnation, a personalist party is faced with two options: *hibernation or commission* (Mietzner, 2016). The first strategy is a condition in which the party and the dominant family have to accept their marginalization and hibernate until a popular family member has been groomed. The second strategy is *commission*, which is a state where the family appoints a non-family member to represent them in the election for public office or party leadership.

The first strategy will eventually lead to a dynastic party. Most parties that choose to refrain from electoral competition usually suffer from the absence of a loyalist who can be commissioned for a position in the party or public office. The family must be content with its current situation while waiting for a popular family descendant ready to enter the political arena (Mietzner, 2016). And because the party does not put forward a candidate, no new network of patronage can be formed. The intra-party competition still maintains the second-tier factional competition logic, where factions contest for anything but the apex position within the party. As a result, when the descendant of the family is ready to step in, dynastic succession becomes more likely.

On the other hand, *commission* can lead to two different outcomes depending on the result of an intervening variable: *electoral result*. If the commissioned candidate manages to win, then the nature of the factional dispute within the party will become a first-tier factional dispute. In contrast, when the party suffers electoral defeat, then the nature of factional dispute remains (i.e., second-tier factional disputes).

Why does election result matter? The winning candidate can offer a novel source of political and economic resources acquired from the state. Mietzner (2023) has discussed at length the Indonesian president's "patronage distribution capacity," which can be capitalized to build a new network of patronage separated from the party leader's web of

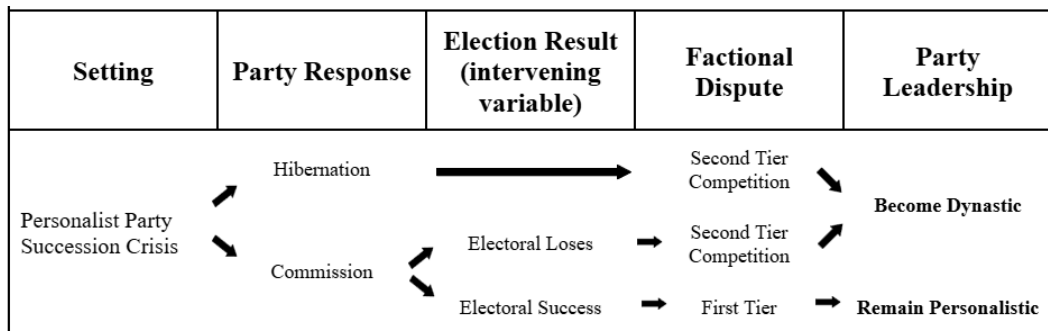
patronage (which includes family and non-family members). This new network is the critical foundation for the establishment of a new party faction that could deter the dominance of the party chairperson. By this logic, a second-tier factional competition within the party will be upgraded into a first-tier factional competition.

Responding to the threat posed by a new network of patronage, the party leader is forced to take a defensive position. Enforcing a dynastic succession becomes even less attractive because of the uncertainty that the heir would be able to command the family-controlled faction s/he inherited. This will motivate the party leader to strengthen his/her supporting base within the party before the family is ready for a dynastic succession. Nevertheless, whatever the outcome of the factional battle, it will be non-dynastic.

The first scenario (winning the election) was demonstrated by the case of the Indian National Congress during the leadership of Sonia Gandhi. She assumed party leadership from 1998 to 2017 before she was re-elected from 2019 to 2022. In the early years of her leadership, she was tasked with the responsibility of restoring the party's electoral fortunes that had suffered from 1998 to 2004. In 2004, INC won the general election, but Gandhi did not want to assume office. Instead, she supported a well-known technocrat and economist, Manmohan Singh, to become the prime minister of India. While it is hard to justify whether the hypothesized mechanism exists, the INC story seems to support the theory because Sonia Gandhi remained the party's leader during Singh's prime ministership. I suspect the same mechanism applied to PDIP during Jokowi's presidency.

By contrast, when a personalist party that commissions a non-family member loses an election, the evolution of factional competition is unlikely to commence. Electoral defeat makes the party order remain unipolar, rendering the structure of factional competition to follow the same second-tier competition logic. However, this monotony cannot be welcomed by everyone in the party as pressures for change resulting from electoral defeats are mounting. After all, electoral defeat is the mother of party change (Janda, 1990). The only appropriate option for the party is to speed up the regeneration process. Meanwhile, the party cannot forever stay personalistic, especially when the personalistic leader has lost his/her appeal for electoral purposes or can no longer run for office. This is the essence of the second scenario. Figure 2.1 summarizes the causal argument.

Figure 2. 1
Pathway of the Emergence of Dynastic Party



CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method

This study utilizes Mill's method of difference. This method is structured by having at least two cases that have the same outcome of interest, but one with the presence of the hypothesized variable and one with the absence of it (Skocpol & Somers, 1980, p. 183). In order to control the influence of other variables, the two cases are set to be "comparable." The cases should be comparable, meaning "similar in a large number of important characteristics (variables) which one wants to treat as constant..." (Lijphart, 1971, 687). The cases under study in this research are the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan* (PDIP) and *Partai Demokrat* PD.

3.2 Case Selection

I argue that PDIP and PD are two comparable parties but with one crucial difference: the latter is *de facto* dynastic, and the former is (still) personalistic. These two qualities are the dependent variables. There are other party types beyond these two classifications. However, methodologically speaking, a personalistic party can be thought of as a member of a non-dynastic party. The two parties bear certain resemblances. For one, the party leaders—prior to 2020 for the case of PD—were the President of Indonesia. Megawati (PDIP Leader) was President from 2001 to 2004, while SBY (PD leader before AHY) succeeded Megawati from 2004 to 2014.

Another similarity is the age of both parties. PD was formed in 2001, while PDIP was technically formalized in 1999. There is a two-year gap between the two, but the parties have experienced at least five elections to this day. The third similarity has to do with ideological leanings. PDIP is a well-known secular party. PD is more problematic, but most scholarly works regard the party as secularist (Tanuwidjaja, 2010; Tomsa, 2008; Fossati, 2019; Fossati et al., 2020).

Table 3. 1
Differences and Similarities Between the Two Parties

Similarities	<i>PD</i>	<i>PDIP</i>
Presidency	Yes (2004-2014)	Yes (2001-2004)

Similarities	<i>PD</i>	<i>PDIP</i>
Ideological leanings	Secularist	Secularist
Party Age	23 years (founded in 2001)	25 years (technically founded in 1999)
Differences	Dynastic	Non-Dynastic

3.3 Data Collection

I plan to gather data from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources in this study refer to speeches made by party officials, party documents such as statutes and meeting notes, and interviews. Meanwhile, I gather secondary data from an even wider range of sources, including academic journals, books, news stories, websites, and other relevant sources. I suspect there will be some sort of data that is off-limits, such as party finance. Here, I will rely on publicly available information submitted by parties to the government. In addition, I will also survey available data from reputable think tanks in Indonesia or abroad.

Deciding the list of interviewees is rather difficult. The reason being is that most internal party affairs are conducted beyond public scrutiny. For instance, the case of the presidential nomination 2024. Little is known about the mechanism for which Ganjar Pranowo was nominated by PDIP or how Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar became running mates. Similar to candidate selection, the condition is equally hard to study in terms of leadership selection. Factions within parties are hard to identify, especially in personalistic parties.

Recent developments of factional competition reveal some party splinters from PDIP and PD. This is, fortunately, a useful preliminary lead. Recently, PDIP fired 27 names, including three big names: Former President Joko widodo, Vice President Gibran Rakabumingraka, and Bobby Nasution (Victoria, 2024). Other names were fired for similar reasons: either they ran for office nominated by other parties, or they were considered unsupportive in the last 2024 general and regional elections (Victoria, 2024). There are other names who had resigned leading up to the 2024 presidential election, such as Maruar

Sirait⁵ and Budiman Soedjatmiko⁶. These are the names of those who know the internal workings of the PDIP in deciding nominations and party leadership.

On the side of PD, a year after AHY was inaugurated as the new party leader, he had to cope with backlash from dissenting factions that wanted to appoint someone outside the party but one of the presidential staffers. Inside the democrats, there are names who staged the resistance, such as Max Scopua, Nazzarudin, Marzukie Alie, Johni Allen Marbun, and Darmizal. During the heyday of PD, they were prominent cadres, which contributed to the success of the party.

Recent political developments led me to conclude that there are four factional groups: PDIP loyalists, PD loyalists, PDIP dissenters, and PD dissenters. For starters, one representation from each group will be the starting informants. Next, these first line of informants will refer to other names that could add new data for the research.

3.4 Data Analysis

This thesis adopts a theory-building process-tracing analysis to answer the research question. Process tracing is used as a tool for inferring causality by “finding and interpreting diagnostic evidence” that might confirm the hypothesized mechanism or sequence of events (Collier, 2011). According to the theory, then, at least three pieces of evidence should be present. The first kind of evidence is deliberate party response to the succession crisis, either commission or hibernation. Next is the election result, which is only for the party that chose to commission the election. The third and last piece of evidence is the existence of first-tier and second-tier factional competition. When these three are found, then it can be concluded that the hypothesis is confirmed.

⁵ the Minister of Housing and Settlement.

⁶ the Head of Poverty Alleviation Agency.

CHAPTER IV DATA AND DISCUSSION

4.1 *Partai Demokrat* and the Yudhoyono Family

This chapter substantiates two assertions. Firstly, *Partai Demokrat* (PD) was a personalist party prior to its transformation into a dynastic one. As argued in the first chapter, I regard PD (and PDIP) as personalist parties and dynastic transitions are easier in such parties than in other types of parties like catch-all or religious parties. Secondly, the Yudhoyono family managed to launch the grooming process of AHY with ease due to the absence of a contending faction. What is interesting about its recent party dynamic was that the dissenters only challenged the family's leadership months after the Fourth Congress—to which AHY was coronated.

During its early years, the party was widely considered a vehicle party (Ufen, 2006; Mietzner, 2009; Gammon, 2020) for Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) to run for the 2004 presidential election, making it deserve the title of a “personalist party” (Fionna & Tomsa, 2017). However, as Honna (2012) argued, the party dynamics distanced itself from the usual typology of a personalistic party. The aftermath of the party's 2015 third congress cemented SBY's grip on the party while sidelining possible dissenters.

The following discussion is composed of three parts. The first section explains the early years of PD and its relationship with the Yudhoyono family. While the Yudhoyono faction had a noticeable dynastic tendency, party dynamics acted out as a negating force. The second section outlines the downfall of intra-party democracy and how the outgoing president took over the party from non-Yudhoyono family factions. The last section deals with the process by which PD underwent a relatively short dynastic-building process and the factional battle that followed. This phase ended with the accession of AHY, who succeeded his father in the leadership post, which was caused by the impotence of dissenting factions.

4.1.1 The Rise and Fall of Intra-Party Democracy

The Origin

The origin of *Partai Demokrat* resembles what Barry Levitt (2012) describes as an “electoral movement.” It refers to an “ad-hoc group” specially formed to support the candidacy of an individual in an election (Levitt, 2012, p. 37). Persuaded by Megawati's former allies, PD was established as a political vehicle for SBY to contest in the 2004 presidential election. SBY himself was very cautious about his political positioning, so he

did not announce his presidential bid immediately. The Yudhoyono family was not the central actor of the PD establishment. The family joined forces with the party only after the party was formally established. The extent of family influence in the party was rather dynamic prior to 2013. However, the dynastic tendency of the Yudhoyono family can already be seen in the early years of PD.

The idea of creating the party was championed by close colleagues of Megawati—Indonesia's President from 2001 to 2004—who were disappointed by her decision to support Hamzah Haz as her vice instead of SBY. Jun Honna (2012) mentioned two important names: Vence Rumangkang and Suko Sudarso.⁷ The former was a treasurer at *Yayasan Pendidikan Bung Karno*, while the later was the deputy chair of PDIP research and development department.

Soon after Hamzah Haz was elected as Megawati's Vice President, Vence persuaded SBY to build a political party, to which SBY agreed. Yudhoyono formulated the party doctrine, composed the party's march song, and proposed the party logo. Even the name itself, "*Demokrat*," came from him (Putri, 2021). Vence and Yudhoyono's aides started recruiting potential members and activists. On September 9th, 2001, PD was officially declared by 99 party founders. I believe it was no coincidence that the exact date of PD's birth coincided with SBY's birthday.

The Yudhoyono Family Occupying Party Executives

The founding members expected SBY to become the party's first chairman. However, SBY was very cautious with his political move because there was a lingering hope that Megawati would choose him as her running mate in the 2004 presidential election. SBY's awkward political positioning—building a party while keeping other scenarios open—concerned elites in PD. At this point, family members became a useful "ace card." SBY's wife, Kristiani Herrawati, was the first deputy chairperson of PD, and she acted as insurance to the party so that the Yudhoyono family would not leave the party. At the party, his wife became his ears and eyes (Ananta, Arifin, & Suryadinata, 2005, p. 126).

PD nominated SBY and Jusuf Kalla in the 2004 presidential election. A political drama between SBY and Megawati boosted his popularity (Zulkifli, Sepriyossa, & Sugiharto, 2004). SBY won the presidential election, while PD finished fifth in the

⁷ These two names are also mentioned by Suhendro Boroma (2010) who was commissioned by the party to write a book about a short history of the party titled "*The History and Victory of Partai Demokrat*."

legislative election—garnering around 7% of votes. The party's performance was surprising, and many believed this was caused by SBY's sudden rise in popularity rather than the party machine (Honna, 2012; Ananta, Arifin, & Suryadinata, 2005). Ironically, after scoring impressive results in the general election, the party underwent factional disputes over the spoils of victory. The dispute was mainly between the party chairman, Budhisantoso, and Vence Rumangkang, one of the party initiators.

SBY's "noble" intervention ended the bitter dispute between Budhisantoso and Vence Rumangkang. He promised that a peaceful national congress would be held in the near future. In addition, the newly elected President committed to being directly involved in the steering committee of the Congress. The first national Congress, held in Bali in May 2005, suppressed factional conflicts. The Congress also demonstrated the process by which the Yudhoyono family amassed power within the party.

The aftermath of the first PD's national Congress clearly showcased the first dynastic tendency of the Yudhoyono family. However, it did not mean that the Yudhoyono family was completely cohesive. SBY's wife nominated Hadi Utomo, Yudhoyono's brother-in-law, as a candidate for the party chair. SBY initially disliked the idea, but his wife was proven to be a skillful politician. Hadi Utomo was successfully elected as the second party chair, outperforming the incumbent (Budhisantoso) and Suratto Siswodihardjo. The party also managed to institutionalize SBY's position within the party as the head of the advisory council (Dewan Pertimbangan). Two other names are of importance. Edhie Baskoro Yudhoyono, the President's son, was appointed head of leadership training or kaderisasi. Herrawati's younger brother, Hartanto Edhi Wibowo, was appointed as the head of the state-owned companies' department within the party—a very strategic position.

After Hadi Utomo announced all the names of the party's central organizational board (DPP), many actors who were not included felt disappointed. Dissenting voices emerged because Utomo appointed new names and excluded "senior members" in the DPP. Most notably, dissenting voices came from Vence Rumangkang and Sutan Bhatoegana. There was an idea to hold an extraordinary congress, but Vence quickly suppressed it (Boroma, 2010, p. 331). Instead, Vence and other senior members urged SBY to reshuffle the newly established DPP. Due to complaints from senior cadres, the relationship between Hadi Utomo and SBY was in turbulence. It did not escalate into a family feud because of the role of several central board members, and one of them is Anas Urbaningrum. "I became a bridge between SBY and Hadi Utomo several times. Their relationship was not totally

smooth, as there was ‘dynamics’ between them” (Interview with Anas Urbaningrum, 2025).

Hadi Utomo ended the intra-party factional dispute by promising Vence and Budhisantoso that he would only serve for one term (Honna, 2012). He also managed to expand the party with the help of new names. Three names significantly altered the party’s dynamics in 2010. The first person is Marzukie Alie, and the second is Anas Urbaningrum. Both were recruited by Utomo. The third person was Andi Malarangeng who SBY recruited as his presidential spokesman. SBY also installed Andi as the head of human resource management within PD.

I would like to add an elaboration of the nature of factional conflicts within PD. Similar to a claim made by Fionna & Tomsa (2020), the nature of factional conflict within PD was not fueled by social cleavages or ideological reasons. The main rationale for the internal dispute was patronage-based, as this was clearly shown when Utomo did not accommodate dissenting voices in the DPP structure. Strategic occupations were given to newer elites, while senior elites were either sacked upward in the advisory council—such as Vence, Budhisantoso, and Mangindaan—or excluded from the structure. Senior members who enjoyed certain privileges during Budhisantoso’s tenure were stripped away from their previous occupations. However, this faction could not be opposed further because many of them were parliamentarians. Resigning from PD was not even an option because it meant losing their parliamentary positions.

It is rather hard to evaluate the performance of Utomo’s leadership. On the one hand, the party could not score a major victory in the provincial election. Of the 32 provinces, PD only won or joined the ruling coalitions in eight provinces. Honna (2012) remarked that this result demonstrated PD’s organizational weakness at the local level. However, the party obtained the largest number of votes in the 2009 legislative election and won a landslide victory in the 2009 presidential elections. In the aftermath of the 2009 general election, PD ensured SBY’s re-incumbency and the parliament’s chairmanship.

The idea of coattail effects might serve as an explanatory variable for PD’s success in the general election. Andi Mallarangeng (2025) supports this idea, stating that more than half of PD’s vote share in the legislative election can be attributed to the popularity of SBY. Unfortunately, Andi’s assertion cannot be taken at face value since no systematic evidence can be marshaled to substantiate the coattail effect hypothesis. So far, the best data for a guesstimation is the result of two general elections in 2009 and 2014 for PD, which stood

at 20,85% and 10,19%, respectively (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025). Surprisingly, these numbers correspond to Mallarangeng's estimation.

The Second National Congress: The Victory of an Outsider

In 2010, PD held the second party congress in Bandung. In this Congress, the Yudhoyono family faced significant opposition in the party chairman election. The opposition came from a faction outside the family. There were three candidates, each representing a different faction. The first faction was the Yudhoyono family, which supported Andi Mallarangeng, who was widely known as their consigliere. The second faction supported Marzuki Alie and was pioneered by senior members of the party, most notably Budhisantoso and Max Socapua. At that time, Alie's prospect was rather promising because he was the Speaker of the House of Representatives (DPR) and the party's secretary general. The third faction is primarily new blood and committed to supporting Anas Urbaningrum. Important names in his campaign team are Muhammad Nazarudin, Angelina Sondakh, Achmad Mubarak, and Saan Mustofa.

The result of the election was a surprise; Anas came out victorious, defeating the Yudhoyono family faction and other senior members. However, the Congress had already decided to establish a new body that gives SBY an extended authority over the party: The Majelis Tinggi or High Assembly. This new body superseded the existing decision-making structure and procedure on important matters, including nominating presidential candidates, gubernatorial candidates, legislative candidates, appointing coalition partners, and strategic positions in the House of Representatives. The new authority was clearly designed to cement Yudhoyono's grip on the party.

The aforementioned authorities were never clearly mentioned in the 2005 Party Constitution (AD/ART). However, it is not clear whether this new body was designed to counter-balance Anas' authority. On the one hand, the argument that the High Assembly was set up to limit the authority of Anas was confirmed by Marzuki Alie (2025): "Rules are made to benefit the one(s) who make them. The High Assembly was SBY's idea." At that time, SBY was the chair of the advisory council and high assembly, which made him hold considerable authority within his party. On the other hand, Anas denied the allegation, saying that the establishment of the High Assembly was not an issue for him or any other members of Congress (Interview with Anas Urbaningrum, 2025). Nonetheless, it is clear that Anas did not enjoy the full extent of his leadership authority in PD, and he was not strong enough to challenge the President and his family.

After winning the party leadership position in 2010, Anas Urbaningrum was set on a course for his political ambition. However, his political aspiration did not last long enough. In 2011, a high-profile figure of the party, Muhammad Nazarudin, was involved in many corruption cases. The case did not stop at Nazarudin because he accused other public officers and party elites of receiving the money. Nazarudin also admitted that he siphoned the state's funds to finance Anas Urbaningrum's campaign in the party congress (Muryadi, 2011).

Tempo, a nationally renowned investigative media in Indonesia, dedicated two publications in the May 2011 edition specifically to discussing those involved in the Nazarudin case. He accused SBY's son, Edhie Baskoro Yudhoyono (Ibas), of receiving the "dirty" money. Ibas denied the accusation (Tempo, 2011a). He also stated that SBY knew the whole plot of corruption and vote-buying (Tempo, 2011b).

The Nazarudin case heavily penalized Anas' political prospects and, later, PD's electoral fortune. Anas tried to hold on to whatever political endowment he had left, but it came to an end when the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) alleged he was receiving illegal funds from the Hambalang case in 2013 (Wardah, 2014).⁸ SBY quickly initiated a major reform within the party and marked the end of Anas's political prospects.

SBY stripped Anas of his authority as the party leader by requiring all agencies within the party to reorient the chain of command directly to the High Assembly—a body that SBY spearheaded (Agustina, Kristanti, Purnomo, Sohirin, & Wicaksono, 2013). In February 2013, KPK announced that Anas Urbaningrum was a suspect in the Hambalang case. As a result, Anas resigned from the party (Gatra, 2013). A month later, Yudhoyono took the position of party chairman from Anas through an Extraordinary Congress (*Kongres Luar Biasa*). This new development of PD revealed the centralization of SBY's political power within the party.

4.1.2 The Personalization of Democratic Party

The Third National Congress: Yudhoyono's take-over of the party

"Not me again. Not my family again [...]," remarked Marzuki Alie (2025), impersonating SBY's promise prior to the 2013 Extraordinary Congress. When Anas stepped down from his chairmanship, Marzuki geared up to fill the position because his political position was very strategic. Two reasons are the most prominent. Firstly, Marzuki's former competitor, Andi Mallarangeng, was incarcerated for a corruption case.

⁸ the Hambalang case is a separate case from the one which Nazarudin was involved in.

Secondly, Marzuki was the chair of the parliament. This made Marzuki the strongest candidate for PD's chairmanship in 2013, but not until SBY stepped in.

A negotiation between Marzuki and SBY occurred. The former gave up his intention mainly for two reasons. One, the party was in decline, and hence, internal competition was seen as an unwise move—possibly because it may lessen party cohesion. The second reason is that SBY promised to only lead the party until the 2015 congress (Interview with Marzuki Alie, 2025). For these two reasons, Marzuki endorsed SBY in the extraordinary congress.

To Marzuki's surprise, SBY extended his tenure. The reason for this, I believe, is straightforward: a party leader is a significant political office in the Indonesian political system. Therefore, in order to sustain his political aspiration—dynastic legacy is perhaps one of them—SBY should command a political party. On top of that, SBY engineered the 2015 party statute to amass more power in his hands. As Marzuki (2025) sharply criticizes:

“His dynastic-building tendency has been apparent since he (SBY) changed the party statute. [...] from 2015, he has shown this tendency. By 2020, everything was clear. Out of 99 party founders, only SBY and Vence Rumangkang held important positions within the party.”

In short, SBY effectively removed the first-tier factional battle within PD in 2015.

The 2014 Presidential Election: The Dynasty's Hibernation

In the 2014 general election, the party's electability plummeted as a natural consequence of a series of corruption cases; PD only garnered around 10% of the vote share. It was half of what they earned in 2009. Responding to the upcoming 2014 presidential election, Cikeas—a popular name to denote the “Yudhoyono Family”—carried out a desperate measure: nominating Pramono Edhie Wibowo, SBY's brother-in-law, in the party's presidential convention (Nurita, 2020). However, with very little preparation, Wibowo's electoral prospect was nowhere near promising, and he lost the presidential convention. The party was absent from nominating their own cadre in the presidential election, leaving the election as a two-way contest between Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla and Prabowo Subianto-Hatta Rajasa. In short, PD hit rock bottom in 2014.

This is the time when the Yudhoyono family chose “hibernation” as their political strategy. At this point, it is important to reiterate that all political parties wish to contest in a presidential election. Similarly, a political family that dominates a political party will also bear the same logic. When they don't find a promising family member, they will try to nominate a loyalist outside the family circle to represent their interest. However, when the

family faces a challenging political prospect, they will choose to hibernate, just like what the Yudhoyono family did.

While hibernation was chosen as the strategic decision, this does not mean that the family did not groom any potential successor. The nomination of Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (AHY) for the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial election can be viewed in this light. This was considered a bold move because not many people predicted that AHY—then a mayor—would give up his military career to contest for a gubernatorial election (Puspita, 2023). AHY lost the Gubernatorial Election, but his father saw promising potential.

Once again, PD failed to nominate their cadre in the 2019 presidential election. PD also suffered in the legislative election as their vote share decreased from 10,9% in 2014 to just 7,77% in 2019. I argue that this concerning trend can be attributed to the absence of a vote-getter as the provider of the coattail effect for the party. Andi Mallarangeng (2025) agreed with this argument, stating that the current electoral system requires party leaders to have promising electability. The need for a new figure was clear, and the family chose to groom AHY.

Among qualities pertinent to being a party leader, it seems a vote-getter is one of them. The question, then, is, at what point did the Yudhoyono family decide that AHY possesses the quality of a vote magnet? Andi mentioned that the Jakarta Gubernatorial Election was the tipping point where the party saw the true potential of AHY. Although he only received 17.05% of the vote share—which translates into just over 900.000 votes—it should be noted that he was facing two prominent figures with significant electoral endowments: Anies Baswedan and Basuki T. Purnama.

Cikeas faction viewed the aftermath of the Jakarta election as a rough but promising start. As Mallarangeng (2025) proudly remarked: “AHY lost Jakarta, but gained Indonesia.” What Mallarangeng really meant was AHY’s electability after the gubernatorial election. The retired mayor became a name that any presidential candidate in the 2019 and 2024 presidential elections should seriously consider (Affan, 2018; Tempo.co, 2023). PD evaluated that AHY had what it takes to be a vote magnet, especially to recover the party’s electoral fortune through a coattail-effect strategy. For this reason, the party coronated AHY.

4.1.3 Dynastic Transformation

When did the Yudhoyono family decide to pursue a dynastic path? In addition, what happened to the cadres when they discovered that the party's course was redirected to a familial path? Anas (Personal Interview, 2025) remarked on an interesting story:

“That was beyond our expectations. Party seniors believed that PD was designed to become a ‘modern’ party, just like the Democrat Party in the US, because SBY is an intellectual army officer who precisely understands how democracy works, including how to position political parties within democratic dynamics. The idea of the High Assembly, for instance, was never opposed. There were no suspicions or accusations that SBY wanted to centralize power [...] But then, when SBY was elected as a leader in 2013, a number of cadres started to think that the original idea of having a ‘modern’ party was being altered into a ‘family’ party.”

Hence, there must be certain considerations at hand that made SBY decide to close down intraparty democracy. The evidence seems to suggest that familial succession was heavily influenced by the need to replicate the winning formula of PD during 2004 and 2009: coattail effect. This point is also stressed by Andi Mallarangeng (2025): “as long as our electoral system still only rewards popularity, then having a party leader that can also serve as a vote-getter is a must.”

SBY can no longer run for the presidency, leaving the voters with little to no reason to vote for the party. Perhaps regeneration was the only way out for the party, and the family entrusted the party to AHY. Before attaining party chairmanship, AHY led a task force within the party (*Komandan Satuan Tugas Bersama Demokrat*) to ensure the party's victory in the 2019 general election. In October 2019, he was appointed as a deputy chairman. A first-timer with a mediocre performance can generally be accepted, but the grooming process was seen to be finished. In 2020, AHY was coronated as the new party chairman with no noticeable resistance.

The coronation of AHY was relatively smooth, but that did not mean that he enjoyed stability during his tenure. It only took a few months before dissenting voices against the Yudhoyono family in the party launched a political rebuttal. In 2021, a faction consisting of PD senior members attempted to take over the leadership of the party by holding an extraordinary congress in Deli Serdang.

This political turbulence was proven to be challenging for the party, primarily because the dissenting faction nominated someone from the inner circle of Joko Widodo: the Head of Presidential Staff, ret. General Moeldoko. He was the former Commander of

the Indonesian Armed Forces during SBY's presidency.⁹ The Yudhoyono family was forced to put on a defensive stance to safeguard their position within the party. To the family, this was no ordinary factional dispute because the dissenting voices allied themselves with, allegedly, the ruling government.

When the PD's factional battle was on public display, the influence of the Yudhoyono family became even more apparent. In a talk show hosted by national television, Jansen Sitindaon—vice secretary general of PD—remarked that the only reason why millions of cadres are united, even after the turbulence caused by Anas Urbaningrum's leadership, is because the leader carries "Yudhoyono's name." This shows the far-reaching influence of the family; however, what the Cikeas loyalists perceived as strength was viewed as a troubling weakness by the opposing faction.

The rival faction was spearheaded by the party's senior members, including Max Sopacua, Johnny Allen Marbun, Marzuki Alie,¹⁰ Muhammad Darmizal, Yus Sudarso, Tri Yulianto, Syofwatillah Mohzaib, dan Ahmad Yahya. Their main dissatisfaction was straightforward: they despise dynasticism within the party. Interestingly, their alternative to dynasticism was a non-PD member. Marzuki Alie (2025) remarked that Moeldoko was seen as a suitable candidate for the upcoming 2024 presidential election. "He (*the leader*) has to be a four-star general [and] a Javanese. It was that simple" (Marzuki, 2025). Marzuki himself was first offered the chairmanship, but he refused. There was also a possibility that money politics played a significant role. Interestingly, both Mallarangeng and Marzuki Alie affirmed this possibility. They both acknowledged that it is possible for a retired general to provide financial resources both to engineer a party congress and to run for the presidential election. In short, Moeldoko was a fierce opponent of the Yudhoyono family.

The Yudhoyono faction quickly responded by firing senior members within the opposing faction. AHY himself initiated a press conference to declare the illegality of the extraordinary congress and lobbied the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to deny the result of the Deli Serdang Congress. Before the extraordinary congress was held in March 2021, Jhoni Allie Marbun lobbied SBY in his residency. SBY dismissed Jhoni's complaint by stating that PD will be more open when it is 25 years old (Utami, 2021). No reconciliation was achieved, and the opposing faction carried out the congress in March

⁹ A painful realization that there is no long-lasting friendship in politics.

¹⁰ During a personal interview, Marzuki denied that he was part of the Deli Serdang faction. He was simply "fulfilling the invitation" of the Deli Serdang organizers (Interview with Marzuki Alie, 2025).

2021. Nonetheless, the dispute was won by the party's incumbents as they maintained stability and secured the leadership position in PD.

The following question is worth answering: Were there any dissenting voices or forms of resistance prior to the coronation of AHY? The answer is 'yes.' However, they were simply too weak. As Marzuki (2025) described, "those who had the right to speak were excluded from the congress. [...] Those who could stay in the congress room were the ones who want coronation." There were no signs of competition over the apex position, which made the factional dynamic second-tiered. Thus, AHY succeeded his father.

4.2 PDIP Dynastic Succession: What Holds Them Back from Succession?

Leadership succession has been one of the most discussed issues for PDIP. After two consecutive losses in the 2004 and 2009 presidential elections, observers began to discuss possible names for succeeding Megawati (Heryanto, 2010; Mietzner, 2009). However, for more than 25 years, Megawati fiercely maintained her status quo as the sole ruler of the party. Dissenting voices were very pronounced in two congresses: the 2000 and 2005. However, from 2010 onwards, Megawati's position was uncontested, leaving the factional dynamic in the party to follow the second-tier competition logic. Interestingly, a recent development showcases the revival of intra-party competition for the chairperson position.

As stated in the introduction section, this study aims to investigate why PDIP has not made a leadership succession, particularly hereditary succession, within the Soekarno bloodline. While the possibility for non-Soekarno succession is still open, chances are small. One might say that it is not a matter of "who" will replace Megawati, but "when" and the chief candidate for it is Puan Maharani, Megawati's daughter. If this is true, then "what" holds Megawati from initiating a dynastic succession?

This section aims to explore possible answers to the aforementioned questions. The following is composed of three main parts. The first part discusses the early years of PDIP, a period when the party experienced an intense party dynamic. The second part retells the story of party personalization under Megawati and how PDIP addressed its succession crisis in the 2014 general election. The last section deals with the most recent development of the party and factors that might hinder hereditary succession within PDIP.

4.2.1 Early Years of PDIP: Intense Factional Dynamics

The Birth of PDIP

PDIP is a party with a long-standing historical root. The party claims to be the natural descendant of *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (PNI), a party that the first president of Indonesia controlled. After the downfall of Soekarno, the New Order regime simplified Indonesia's party system, leaving only three parties to contest in a highly engineered election. The three parties are *Partai Demokrat Indonesia* (PDI), *Golongan Karya* (Golkar), and *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP). PDI is the embryo of PDIP. Under Soeharto, PDI and PPP only acted as peripheries in Indonesian politics as Golkar always won election after election from 1977 to 1997 (Verianty, 2024).

Starting from the 1980s, PDI suffered electoral losses and was riddled by internal disputes among different factions. Intra-party disputes were somewhat inevitable since PDI was a merger between left-leaning parties and non-Muslim parties.¹¹ To overcome the hurdle, PDI's elites introduced a member of the Soekarno family into their line-up: Megawati Soekarnoputri. She served as a vote getter, and the party enjoyed a satisfying vote increase. Megawati was first elected as a Member of the Legislative Council in 1987.

In the 1993 Extraordinary Congress (KLB), Megawati was nominated for the leadership position in PDI. The New Order government of Indonesia was irritated with Megawati's nomination, which led to a series of assaults on Megawati's nomination. Surprisingly, she won the party election, but the Congress ended up in a deadlock. She immediately declared herself as the *de facto* party chairwoman (Kasenda, 2018; Hidayat & Haryono, 2023). In the aftermath of Megawati's victory, a group of pro-government cadres led by Soerjadi initiated another KLB in 1996. This KLB was initiated on the ground that Megawati's victory was illegitimate. The government supported and legalized Soerjadi's version of PDI. From 1996 to 1998, PDI was in an awkward position as there were two factions claiming legitimate leadership: Megawati- and Soerjadi-led PDI (Yuniarto, 2021; Hidayat & Haryono, 2023). Leading to the 1999 general election, Megawati changed the name of the party to "PDI Perjuangan" or *Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle*. PDIP was officially born and declared on February 14th, 1999 (Yuniarto, 2021).

In the early years of Reformasi, PDIP had to deal with factional disputes. There were many kinds of internal disputes, but this research is interested in whether first-tier

¹¹ In 1973, the government of Indonesia merged five parties into a single party—PDIP. These parties were PNI, Partai Kristen Indonesia (Parkindo), Partai Katolik, Partai Musyawarah Rakyat Banyak (Murba), Partai Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia (IPKI).

factional disputes exist. The next two sections examine how Megawati could maintain her grip on the party amidst contestation in two congresses, the 2000 and 2005 congresses.

The Semarang Congress (2000)

As the dusk of *Reformasi* unfolded, PDIP enjoyed a landslide victory in the 1999 general election, securing more than 30% of national votes (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, n.d.). Unfortunately, the party failed to secure the presidential seat due to Islamic parties' politicking. Nevertheless, PDIP still managed to install Megawati as the Vice President. Against this backdrop, PDIP held its first national Congress, which took place in Semarang in 2000.

Megawati still enjoyed a powerful position in the upcoming Semarang Congress. However, signs of a first-tier factional battle were seen leading to the Congress. Hidayat & Haryono (2023, pp. 32-34) noted that, prior to the Semarang Congress, several prominent issues were circulating among PDIP elites and ordinary cadres. One was related to Megawati's position after having a new role as Indonesia's Vice President. The opposants problematized the issue of Megawati's leadership as they referred to Soekarno's 1955 speech: "My loyalty to my party ends where my loyalty to my country begins" (Hidayat & Haryono, 2023, p. 33). Two prominent members were publicly known to have an intention to run for chairmanship: Eros Djarot and Dimiyati Hartono. However, their candidacies were blocked for vague reasons (Budi, et al., 2000). The Semarang Congress coronated Megawati as the PDIP leader.

The coronation of Megawati in the Semarang Congress shows that the opposing force was not strong enough to contest Soekarno's daughter. Even when the leadership election with multiple candidates running for the position was held, many argued that Megawati would come out victorious nonetheless (Budi et al., 2000). Equally important, Djarot and Hartono seemed to understand their slim chances of winning against Megawati. Their real aim was, perhaps, not the apex position in the party, but concessions of power sharing within the party. In this episode of PDIP's internal dynamic, the party failed to institutionalize a healthy political competition for its leadership position. Therefore, any factional disputes that occurred were second-tiered.

The Bali Congress (2005)

Leading up to the Bali Congress in 2005, Megawati received yet another opposition from a number of prominent cadres, which was triggered by poor election results in 2004. PDIP failed to maintain Megawati's re-incumbency in the presidential election, and the

party's vote share for the parliamentary election also dropped significantly—from a whopping 33,74% in 1999 to 18,53% (Kusnandar, 2022). These unsatisfying results prompted criticism from other senior members who demanded a thorough evaluation of the party's performance (Hidayat & Haryono, 2023). The members who voiced their dissatisfaction were dubbed the “*Old Bulls*” or *Banteng Lama*. On the other hand, the dissenters called themselves PDIP's Reform Movement (Agustina, Rosyid, & Wibowo, 2005). Laksamana Sukardi, Arifin Panigoro, Sophan Sophiaan, Roy B. B. Janis, and Didik Supriyanto are prominent names in this faction. Party restructuration and leadership succession were the chief demands of this faction.

Another interesting note on the party's leadership contestation was the possibility of sibling rivalry leading to the 2005 Congress. Guruh Soekarnoputra, Megawati's brother, intended to nominate himself as the leadership candidate. However, neither Guruh nor the Reform Movement could contest Megawati in the Congress, as she was coronated yet again in the Bali Congress. To settle a potential family feud, Megawati elected her brother Guruh as the party's deputy leader for educational and cultural affairs (Unidjaja & Atmanta, 2005). Meanwhile, she sacked senior cadres who were involved in the *Old Bulls* faction.

The Bali Congress marked the end of dissenting voices against Megawati and the beginning of party personalization. Andreas Ufen (2006) went rather extreme by arguing that authoritarianism and personalism started to inhibit PDIP, as shown by the Bali Congress. Nonetheless, it is clear that Megawati wanted an unopposed leadership. Dissenting voices were “systematically silenced,” and Megawati's accountability speech was almost left untouched.

How can we evaluate PDIP's factional dispute regarding the 2005 Congress? While the Congress seemed to be yet another smooth, uncontested victory for Megawati, dubbing it a second-tiered factional battle might be misleading. In contrast, Mietzner (2020) argued that this Congress posed tough challenges—if not the toughest—to Megawati's leadership. Therefore, I regard this particular dynamic as a first-tier factional competition.

There are good reasons to regard the 2005 Congress as an event of first-tier factional battle. Firstly, there were at least two organized factions that tried to criticize Megawati and challenge her authority. These factions were the old bulls and people under Guruh Soekarnoputra. Secondly, they really put up a fight. Initially, there were five names who wanted to run for the leadership position: Arifin Panigoro, Sophan Sopian, Kwik Kian Gie, Roy BB Janis, and Guruh Soekano Putra (DetikNews, 2005). Four of them resigned from the candidacy to unify support towards Guruh. However, changes made by the

Congress organizer regarding the electoral mechanism significantly decreased Guruh's prospects. As a consequence, Guruh resigned from the contest, leaving Megawati as the sole candidate in the Congress (Faisol, Sunarlan, & Krisnadi, 2015). The fact that Megawati's faction felt the need to perform a heavy-weight engineering on the electoral mechanism shows that the challenges they faced must pose a certain degree of risk.

In the aftermath of the 2005 congress, PDIP fired 12 names who rejected the result of the Congress (DetikNews, 2005). These 12 names were also heavily involved in the PDIP reform movement. Ex-parliamentarian Zainal Arifin (2025) testified that Taufik Kiemas (Megawati's Husband) and the Christian faction played a significant role in sidelining party dissenters. As a result, the party lost a significant number of senior members who were indeed capable politicians. The preceding years were marked by the centralization of power in the hands of the Soekarno family.

Megawati had been a successful vote-getter for the party due to her widely known charisma within PDIP's traditional electoral base (*abangan*) from 1996 to 2009. In its development, the party's dependence on the Soekarno family grew. Mietzner (2009, p. 10) argues that PDIP "can only survive if the Soekarno family remains engaged in leading the party." While it was hard to ensure what the Soekarno family wanted with the party, there were times when some activists and loyalists voiced their pro-dynasty preferences (Pratama, 2015). If this is true, then PDIP cadres are having a mutually beneficial relationship with the Soekarno family. On the one hand, cadres are "selling" the leadership of Soekarno's descendants in the party to attract votes. On the other hand, this also means that several Soekarno's family members are in elite positions within the organization. This arrangement also contributes to the party's leadership stability.

4.2.2 A Big, Red, Personalist Party (and Its Succession Crisis)

The Second Bali Congress (2010)

From 2010 onwards, PDIP experienced a relatively stable party leadership in that no strong faction could contest Megawati's authority. Leading up to the 2010 Congress, Guntur attempted to oppose her sister, but Megawati was just too powerful within the party. By 2020, even the 'shadow' of factional battles in the party has long been forgotten (Mietzner, 2020). Megawati could maintain a strong grip within her party even when she lost the 2009 presidential election, while PD's Yudhoyono outperformed the party in the legislative election. She even used the 2010 congress to explain her electoral misfortune, accusing that the 2009 election showcased a "manipulative disposition" of the organizer

(BBC Indonesia, 2010). Once again, the 2010 congress inaugurated Megawati as the chairwoman.

The 2010 congress also fueled momentum for new faces from the Soekarno family to appear in public. Two names are of importance: Puan Maharani and M. Prananda Prabowo. Puan had made political presences years prior by becoming one of the PDIP's central board leaders from 2007 to 2010. She also got elected as a member of the House of Representatives in 2009. Megawati then elected her as the department chief for politics and inter-institution relationships in the 2010 congress (Azhari, 2023). Prananda, on the other hand, never holds a publicly elected position and rarely makes public appearances. Cintya Dewi (2024) noted that the second Bali Congress was his first public appearance. Today, these two names are known to play a significant role in the party.

The introduction of Puan and Prananda can be interpreted as the way in which a dynastic family grooms its potential successor(s). It should be noted that Megawati had suffered two consecutive defeats, which prompted her to consider a potential successor for party leadership or national leadership contestation. However, in the years that followed, Megawati seemed reluctant to hand over the party's leadership to one of her offspring.

The Jokowi Effect: 2010-2015

In the aftermath of the 2009 general election, PDIP attempted to win local elections in key cities and provinces. One of the main battlegrounds for local elections is the capital city, DKI Jakarta. The party struck a deal with its 2009 ally, *Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya* (Gerindra), and they nominated a promising pair: A Mayor from Solo, Joko Widodo (famously known as Jokowi), and a former regent of East Belitung, Basuki Tjahaya Purnama. Jokowi represented PDIP, while Gerindra was represented by Purnama. This pair defeated the incumbent—Fauzi Bowo and Nachrowi Ramli—who were backed by the ruling party. The effect of winning the Jakarta election was proven to be significant, as Jokowi's poll for the presidential election grew exponentially (see Mietzner, 2015, p. 29).

Leading up to the 2014 election, Jokowi became a new PDIP's electoral magnet, to which he even outperformed Megawati's electability (Ihsanuddin, 2013). Here, the Soekarno Family was at a crossroads: either (a) nominating Megawati yet again or (b) nominating Jokowi as the PDIP's strongest bet. Megawati was still an option, but her poll only showed a weakening sign, and she would almost surely lose to Prabowo Subianto—Gerindra's presidential candidate. Meanwhile, no other member of the Soekarno family could promisingly compete in the presidential election (Mietzner, 2016). This was a clear sign of a succession crisis for the Soekarno family, at least for the party's electoral

continuity. The most attractive option was to capitalize on Jokowi's meteoric rise and commission him to represent the family in the upcoming presidential election.

Here, it is essential to note that while Megawati commissioned Jokowi to contest for the presidential election, not all members of the Soekarno family and PDIP's upper echelons were happy with the matriarch's decision. As a matter of fact, it annoyed the family's second in line, Puan Maharani. As Puan's mother invalidated her ambition to run in the presidential race, she expressed indignation by "sabotaging" Jokowi's campaign (Mietzner, 2016). In addition, senior cadres in the PDIP central board were deeply divided about the prospect of Jokowi's presidency. As Mietzner (2015, p. 35) noted, Jokowi's victory "would lead to significant power shifts in PDIP, sidelining Megawati's old networks in favor of Jokowi supporters." As a consequence, senior PDIP politicians only provided less than half-hearted support for Jokowi's campaign.

Megawati commissioned Jokowi to contest for the 2014 presidential election, and he successfully won the race. In this period, one question emerged: were there any changes in power dynamics within PDIP? There are two answers: no and yes. No, because there wasn't any significant power shift within the party in the early years of Jokowi's presidency. Yes, because Jokowi attempted to take over PDIP from the Soekarno family at the end of his presidency. I come back to the second point later in this chapter. For now, I focus on PDIP leadership during the period of the Jokowi Presidency.

PDIP under Jokowi Presidency (2015-2024)

The power dynamics of PDIP in the early years of Jokowi did not change much. Two occasions substantiate this assertion, and they all occurred in the Third Bali Congress. Leading up to the congress, issues related to the cabinet formation worsened the relationship between Megawati and Jokowi. This tension was unresolved during the time of the 2015 Congress. Hence, on the first occasion, Megawati tried to pressure Jokowi by saying out loud on the podium that party cadres, including the President, must implement party instructions—which are the same as Megawati's instructions. In contrast, the Indonesian President was not allowed to speak. The second occasion: Megawati was coronated by the congress for the fourth time.

The two occasions symbolize the absence of first-tier competition, even when there was a newly elected president. Indonesia is, by and large, a clientelistic polity (Aspinall & Hicken, 2019), meaning the President can generate a significant patronage power to amass more power (maybe Mietzner, 2023). Hence, Jokowi should have been a new power center within PDIP, but the answer to that was ambiguous. On the one hand, Jokowi was never

officialiated as one of the party's central board members (even until the end of his presidential term). This excluded him from day-to-day party affairs. On the other hand, it is clear that Jokowi had a bargaining position on key issues, especially candidate nominations. For instance, Jokowi managed to persuade the party to nominate his son, Gibran Rakabuming, for the 2020 Surakarta Mayoral Election (Putri, 2020). Jokowi did the same thing for his son-in-law, Bobby Nasution, in the 2020 Medan Mayoral election (Sinaga, 2019).

Notice, however, that concessions made for Jokowi's own dynastic building are all second-tiered prizes within the party. Jokowi had no say regarding the appointment of members of the central board, the presidential nomination, and the selection of the party leader. In 2020, PDIP still remained in the hands of its long-time matriarch. In 2023, Megawati did not give Jokowi much room to maneuver in the nomination of Ganjar Pranowo as PDIP's presidential candidate. The relative absence of Jokowi's influences in these two critical areas showcases the autonomy of PDIP from the President.

The Commissioning of Ganjar Pranowo

Leading up to the 2024 election, questions over who would be chosen by PDIP as the next presidential candidate began to re-emerge. Two names were most prominent: Puan Maharani and Ganjar Pranowo. Both had already launched campaigns to increase their popularity since 2021. Puan exploited party infrastructure (Riana, 2021), while Ganjar mainly utilized social media and volunteer groups (Mietzner, 2024). The "popularity contest" between the two ended up revealing the inadequacy of Megawati's heir, as Puan's electability was nowhere near competitive.¹² Ganjar, on the other hand, led the presidential poll in 2022. Even two months before the official registration of presidential candidates, Ganjar's electability was still number one (Khoirunnisa, 2023).

The Soekarno family was having a succession crisis yet again. The family's most potential member, Puan, had the ambition but lacked in capacity. Thus, the family was left with the same old options: commission or hibernation. Ganjar was a very promising candidate, and for this reason, the family did not hibernate but commissioned him to represent them in the presidential election. However, PDIP's candidate did not win the 2024 Presidential Election.

To be fair, Ganjar was never in a comfortable position during his nomination and campaign. He was caught up in a web of political constellation between elites, making him

¹² <https://www.tempo.co/politik/survei-capres-smrc-tren-suara-melemah-puan-maharani-belum-kompetitif-jadi-bacapres-2024-237637>

strained in a precarious position. Jokowi was the first high-profile name to motivate him to run for President. Before Ganjar managed to obtain support from the party, Surya Paloh offered Ganjar a nomination seat from NasDem, an offer that Ganjar declined. In the end, Ganjar received a full blessing from Megawati, but he lost support from Jokowi (personal interview with Ganjar, 2025). However, the party did not provide full support and Ganjar only received support from several PDIP leaders that cared about PDIP's reputation. "What they saw was this is not about making Ganjar the president, but about the party's honor and dignity" (Confidential Interview, 2025). The case of Ganjar's nomination reflects a deeper drift within the party, primarily a factional battle between the Jokowi faction and the Megawati faction. When Ganjar was no longer within Jokowi's reach, the President diverted his support to Prabowo Subianto (Mietzner, 2024). "I have met with important people and financial backers connected to Mr. Jokowi. We have discussed things extensively and made dealings. However, they suddenly retracted their initiatives" (personal interview with Ganjar, 2025). As a consequence, Megawati won the nomination battle, but Jokowi won the electoral war.

Mietzner (2016, p. 363) came up with a very interesting remark on the commissioning of politicians outside family members: "the new president might subsequently cut his or her ties with the dynasty." This is an inherent risk of handing over posts for higher offices to someone unrelated to the dynasty. Today, it is clear that Jokowi and Ganjar are walking through different paths. Jokowi cut ties with the Soekarno dynasty, as he is trying to build his own. PDIP sacked Jokowi and his cronies (see table 4.1). Ganjar, failing the electoral bet, is no longer a threat to the existing leadership and, unlike Jokowi, he was appointed as one of the members of the party central board.

Table 4. 1
Prominent Names Who Left PDIP Before and After the 2024 Election

Number	Names	Occupation	Date of Dismissal	Notes
1	Joko Widodo	Former President of Indonesia	16 December 2024	Discharged by the Central Board
2	Gibran Rakabuming Raka	Former Mayor of Solo	16 December 2024	Discharged by the Central Board
3	Bobby Nasution	Former Mayor of Medan	16 December 2024	Discharged by the Central Board

Number	Names	Occupation	Date of Dismissal	Notes
4	Budiman Soedjatmiko	Former Parliamentarian	24 August 2023	Discharged by the Central Board for Publicly Supporting Prabowo Subianto
5	Maruar Sirait	Former Parliamentarian	15 January 2024	Resigned from PDIP
6	Efendi Simbolon	Member of Parliament	28 November 2024	Discharged by the Central Board

Source: Acquired from multiple sources

Other than Jokowi's relatives, Gibran and Bobby, there are other three prominent names that reoriented their political patronage. Budiman Soedjatmiko is now the Chief of the Poverty Alleviation Acceleration Agency in the Prabowo Administration. Maruar Sirait is currently the Minister of Housing and Residential Areas. Meanwhile, Effendi Simbolon currently doesn't hold any special position within Prabowo's administration, but he strongly criticized PDIP's regression in the 2024 general election. These three names were very much discussed during my interview with Ganjar, showcasing how prominent they were in PDIP. "Political treasons occur because there are privileges and resources that they acquire, [even for] the likes of Maruarar Sirait and Budiman Soedjatmiko." (Interview with Ganjar, 2025). For now, it might be concluded that these three names were against the Soekarno Family and they joined forces with the opposing faction.

4.2.3 Leadership Succession? Someone is Trying to Mess up my Party

What does the aftermath of the 2024 general election hold for PDIP? Who would be the next PDIP leader? While Megawati's authority over PDIP seems untouchable, questions over leadership succession were increasingly pronounced leading up to the 2025 congress. What the ruling faction wants right now is a smooth leadership transition and the new chairman must receive blessing from Megawati and the Soekarno family. She was planning for a retirement from the political scene, but quickly reversed her decision when she learned that someone wanted to "messing up" (*awut-awut*) her party (Harbowo, 2024). Ganjar Pranowo also advised Megawati to stay in power at least until the political situation is more benign (Interview with Ganjar Pranowo, 2025). Thus, at least it is clear that one of

the effects of Indonesia's last general election on PDIP is that Megawati had to stay in power.

What does “messaging up” mean and why it made Megawati turn defensive? Perhaps the term “messaging up” is best represented by remarks from Effendi Simbolon who publicly stated that Megawati must “resign from her position as a form of taking responsibility [...] all members of the leadership board must resign as well. The party does not belong to an individual” (Hutajulu, 2025). Calling for the resignation of Megawati means challenging the longstanding establishment of the Soekarno Family and their loyalists in PDIP. It also signals that the opposing faction is ready to assume the party's leadership role.

What about the second in-line? Does Puan herself really want the leadership position in PDIP? My confidential sources and Zainal Arifin confirmed that Puan aims for her mother's position within the party. “She is trying to mimic the motherhood appearance of her mother” (Confidential Interview, 2025). Zainal Arifin even recalled several years ago that a high-profile name was gathering senior politicians to persuade Mega to make a leadership succession. This initiative, Arifin declared, was made to nominate Puan to her own mother. However, factional battle is clearly the main obstacle that the Soekarno family should overcome.

A statement from one of Jokowi's protégés seems to showcase a first-tier factional dispute within the party. However, the interpretation is not very clear-cut. Three things need to be spelled out: (1) who are the main actors that oppose Megawati's leadership; (2) whether the opposing faction can take over PDIP from the Soekarno Family; (3) the effect of such an opposition to the nature of factional battle within the party. These three things significantly shape the nature of factional disputes within PDIP.

Firstly, the opposing faction is led by Jokowi. When I asked Ganjar Pranowo who would mess up PDIP, he answered “I don't know.” But he continued “however, according to our secretary general, it's Jokowi” (Interview with Ganjar Pranowo, 2025). A confidential interview with a PDIP confidant also reveals the same name. “So far, Jokowi is the only man who wants to intervene PDIP” (confidential interview, 2025). In short, most PDIP members believe that Jokowi wants to take over PDIP from the hands of the Soekarno Family. Is there any evidence that can substantiate this assertion from the Jokowi's side? For now, this research is unable to reveal similar expressions stated by Jokowi loyalists. Only Simbolon's remark on Megawati's leadership can be used to justify their criticism towards the party. However, Jokowi aiming for the leadership position in PDIP is a

plausible hypothesis, because the only way for him to have a significant role in Indonesian politics is by taking office in a political party.

Secondly, the Jokowi faction does not have a clear political opening to take over PDIP from the Soekarno Family. Jokowi has been discharged and has no legitimation within the party. Hence, from the institutional point of view, it is not possible for the PDIP leadership to fall into the hands of its discharged members. However, there were many instances of those in a position of power (i.e. the government) attempting party coups in Indonesia. And I believe, PDIP leaders are indeed aware of the full extent of what actions Jokowi might take in order to realize his interests.

Lastly, and most importantly, the nature of the factional competition and its effect on dynastic succession in PDIP. When most senior leaders in PDIP call for the danger of party takeover by Jokowi, this should merit the classification of first-tier factional dispute logic. However, recent developments show that the Soekarno family has no more immediate threat to their party authority. There are some concerning events that disturb the stability of PDIP, including the prosecution of its Secretary-General, Hasto Kristianto (Permana, 2025). The party's congress that was planned to take place in April 2025 is being canceled without clear mention of why or when it will be held. Nonetheless, the grip of the Soekarno Family on PDIP is still very strong and, clearly, there is no internal faction that can contest the incumbent.

Hence, what is the logic of factional competition in PDIP leading up to its 2025 Congress? Here lies the paradox. If there is a first-tier factional competition within PDIP, a kind of dispute that hinders a smooth dynastic transition, then there should be at least one group within the party that has an institutional legitimation and is challenging the reigning family's authority. Clearly, the latter is false, so the antecedent is also false. If factional dispute inside PDIP follows the second-tier logic, then Megawati should have held the congress, either for leadership transitioning or simply coronating herself again. Yet, PDIP is currently on its most alert stage.

One solution to this paradox is to assert that a second-tier factional battle does not automatically lead to a smooth dynastic transition within a party (although one must wait until the result of the 2025 Congress is revealed). The successor must possess certain qualities that correspond to the demand of loyalists and the existing party leader. Puan is the most likely successor (Confidential Interview with PDIP confidant, 2025). However, some questions still linger among prominent cadres, especially whether Puan can match her mother's charisma and political craftsmanship which are largely necessary for unifying

different factions within PDIP. My sources worry that when Megawati no longer assumes leadership, PDIP could easily be overtaken by forces inside or outside the party, even if Megawati's successor is Puan Maharani.

4.3 Does a Dynastic Succession Necessarily Require a Second-Tier Factional Competition?

This section has three aims. The first goal is to summarize the dynamics of the two parties at hand, from the early years of Reformasi to their most recent developments. Secondly, this section generates a hypothesis inference (i.e. whether my hypothesis is supported or must be rejected). Overall, the independent and dependent variables do co-vary, but the causal mechanism of the hypothesis might need further specification as there are other aspects that merit attention. Based on the hypothesis, I made a prediction that PDIP will soon transform into a dynastic party with a member of the Soekarno family replacing Megawati. The result of the 2025 Congress of PDIP will be the ultimate arbiter of this hypothesis. Lastly, I add another discussion on leadership quality and how parties respond to the quality of would-be successors.

Table 4.2. summarizes the dynamics of factional battles within PDIP and PD, centering around every congress that has been held. Before I compare the two, I'd like to add a comment on how I interpret factional battles within PDIP. When one views PDIP's dynamic from the procedural standpoint, it would seem that PDIP only had second-tier factional competition in every congress. After all, the congress always resulted in the coronation of Megawati. However, this conclusion grossly ignores other important political facts about the intention of factions outside the Soekarno family to contest for the leadership position. This is why greater appreciation of the party's factional dynamic should be given to two congresses, the second and the (would be) sixth congress.

Table 4. 2
Factional Competitions in PDIP and PD from 2000 to 2025

Party	First Congress	Second Congress	Third Congress	Fourth Congress	Fifth Congress	Sixth Congress
PDIP	• Held in 2000; • Megawati was coronated; • The were competitor s, Eros Djarot and Dimiyati Hartono, but they were	• Held in 2005; • Megawati was coronated; • The Mega faction faced a tough challenge (Mietzner, 2020);	• Held in 2010; • Megawati was coronated; • The leadership was uncontested; • Second-tier factional battle.	• Held in 2015; • Megawati was coronated; • PDIP just became the ruling party; • Megawati was still very strong	• Held in 2020; • Megawati was coronated; • PDIP just won Jokowi's reincumbency; • Megawati was still very	• Planned to be held in April 2025 • Megawati was about to retire, but then she declares re-incumbency; • Jokowi is the main

	blocked from Congress; • Second-tier factional battle.	• First-tier factional battle.		in the party; • Second-tier factional battle.	strong in the party; • Second-tier factional battle.	opposing faction • First-tier factional battle.
<i>Demokrat</i>	• Held in 2005; • Hadi Utomo was elected as the party chairman, beating two other names; • PD was the ruling party; • First-tier factional battle.	• Held in 2010; • Anas Urbaningrum was elected as the party chairman; • PD was the ruling party; • First-tier factional battle.	• Extraordinary Congress was held in 2013; • Normal Congress was held in 2015 • SBY was coronated and received no opposition; • Second-tier factional battle.	• Held in 2020; • AHY was coronated; • Immediately received oppositions from dissatisfied members; • Second-tier factional battle.	• Held in 2025; • AHY was coronated; • Immediately received oppositions from dissatisfied members; • Second-tier factional battle.	-

Source: Author's Own Categorization

Both PD and PDIP had their fair share of internal dynamics. In the second Congress of PD, intra-party democracy hindered the ability of the Yudhoyono family (the strongest faction) to install their loyalist in the leadership position. On the other hand, the strongest faction in PDIP managed to defend their authority against opposing factions in the 2005 congress. However, the two parties did not face the issue of an electoral crisis during the first decade of the 21st century. In addition, no potential successor was readily available. It was only in 2014 that both parties made significant decisions that altered the foundation of internal party disputes.

The comparison between PD and PDIP reveals that the nature of factional battles and their position within the government affect the possibility of having familial succession. It only took SBY seven years (more or less), after a series of party personalization, for him to make a dynastic transition to his son, AHY. This was possible because by 2020, the party's factional dynamic was second-tiered and they had no position in the government—which makes the emergence of a contending faction less likely. PDIP was different. While it had a second-tier factional dispute from 2010 to 2020, they were the ruling party and the president was not a family loyalist (i.e. Jokowi). Jokowi's intention was only revealed in the aftermath of the 2024 general election, where most of the PDIP leaders accused him of wanting to take over the party, and his loyalists called for

Megawati's resignation as a party leader. Megawati has announced her nomination for the upcoming congress and PDIP postponed the 2025 from its original date. It is clear that PDIP is taking a defensive posture today and the Soekarno family is holding on to their position dearly. Thus, the existence of a first-tier factional is one of the prime reasons why PDIP delayed a dynastic transition.

The nature of factional battle is not the only explanatory variable, as there are other variables that can explain the divergence between PDIP and PD. The quality of the successor might be one of them, a point which is weakly captured in my causal mechanism. I came across this point during my fieldwork. The personal quality of a would-be successor may vary, but in general he or she should possess requirements needed to be a party chairman such as charisma, political craftsmanship, rational political calculation, and vote-getter ability. Parties view leadership quality differently.

In the case of PD, a leader should be able to manage electoral work, brand himself, and become a vote-getter. Andi Mallarangeng (2025) mentioned that party leaders see this in AHY during the Jakarta Gubernatorial Election: "For us, although AHY lost, he passed the test. Lost in the election, but he passed temptation test and leadership test. On the flip side, he acquired a wider appeal across Indonesia, and not just Jakarta." PDIP views this differently, as they value charisma and conflict management more to keep the party intact. From my interview with my sources from PDIP, Puan Maharani still requires more time to develop her quality. Below is the transcript of my exchange with Ganjar Pranowo that could substantiate this assertion about Puan's readiness:

"Question: Let's assume that the 2025 congress is not postponed and a leadership succession does occur. Is it true that PDIP would be easily intervened (*awut-awut*)? I think PDIP is still a strong party, despite a leadership succession.

Ganjar: No, if there is a succession, and it's not Megawati, and the successor is 'weak', they just have to propose some offers.

Question: Okay, even if it's Puan Maharani?

Ganjar: Yes, it would be easier to intervene PDIP. Just give her this number of ministers and she would accept that. This means our loss in 2025."

My PDIP sources still affirm Mietzner's (2016) contention about Puan Maharani. Puan hasn't provided any proof of a capable politician. All resources that she now possesses were directly inherited from her mother, while her performance in building an electoral base is poor. Matching her mother's charisma, electoral performance, and discipline is a great feat, which some senior members see Puan lacking. This makes PDIP fall steeper into the state of a succession crisis, a condition that makes Megawati recalibrate her next vital decision for the continuity of the party. However, one must proceed with caution because

it requires a whole other mechanism that link the quality of political leadership with party leadership successions.

In conclusion, my hypothesis does not wholly explain the emergence of a dynastic party to emerge in the first place. Indeed, familial successions are more likely to occur in settings where the factional battle follows a second-tier logic. Data shows that PD transformed itself into a dynastic party when the opposing faction(s) is weak or non-existent. Meanwhile, today's PDIP is on a defensive posture because a strong faction that can contest for the leadership position exists. However, as I have noted in the previous chapter, the current state of PDIP is really ambiguous. On one hand, it is true that PDIP is in a precarious position. On the other, the Soekarno family has no credible threat from within to the point where it could be argued that the structure of factional battle in PDIP is second-tiered. Upcoming development might influence the trajectory of PDIP, especially its dynastic succession. For now, PDIP manages to gradually neutralize potential threats both from internal and external sources.

While the theory requires certain alteration and upcoming events might significantly decide PDIP's endgame, predictions can still be made on the basis of my hypothesis. Holding all variable constant, I predict that PDIP will soon have to make a leadership succession from the Soekarno bloodline. This is because, no other factions can match the authority of the incumbent faction. Puan's leadership quality might be the only hurdle that can obstruct her from succeeding her mother. However, as I have argued previously, personal quality is hard to measure. Objectively speaking, Puan holds important positions both within and outside the party. This makes her command a significant amount of patronage resources for accumulating acquiescence from party elites and rank-and-file members. Threats were largely neutralized, safeguarding the possibility of dynastic succession. The next PDIP congress, is the ultimate arbiter of this prediction.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUDING REMARKS: FACTIONS AND DYNASTICISM

This chapter marks the end of my research on the emergence of a dynastic party in Indonesia. It presents two main parts: a summary of the thesis and the limitations of the study. The summary section provides a cursory recap of this study, consisting of research puzzle, theoretical framework, method, and findings generated by this study. The last section, constraints, discusses limiting factors this kind of research faces and some ways to deal with such constraints.

5.1 Summary

This research starts with the following puzzle in mind: what made dynastic parties first emerge in Indonesia? The concept of a “dynastic party” was first coined by Chhibber (2011) to describe/label some national and local parties that had made at least one dynastic succession in India. Such a party is quite rare, but not non-existent. Countries in South Asia and Latin America are known to be fertile ground for dynastic parties. Indonesia, however, had no precedent of dynastic parties until 2020, when *Partai Demokrat* (PD) underwent a dynastic transition from SBY to AHY. The puzzle comes when there are other dynastic-prone parties, that still refrain themselves from transitioning, such as *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDIP) and *Partai Nasional Demokrat* (NasDem). Theoretically, Chhibber's diagnosis on why parties become dynastic cannot fully explain the transformation of PD, while not PDIP or NasDem. Thus, this study asks: Why did *Partai Demokrat* become a dynastic party in 2020, while *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan* remains a personalistic party prior to 2025?

Comparing PDIP and PD is, I submit, justifiable. They are among the oldest parties in Indonesia today and they both have experienced becoming a ruling party. The two parties are respectively dominated by a strong political family: the Soekarno family dominates PDIP, while the Yudhoyono family rules over PD. In terms of party programs and attitudes towards religion, these parties are hard to distinguish—essentially, just like most parties in Indonesia. Despite all of these similarities, PD managed to make a dynastic transition, while PDIP hasn't done so.

What could possibly answer the question? Chhibber (2011) argues that the emergence of the dynastic party is explained by two factors: weak internal organization and centralized party financing. While the theory explains the cause of dynastic parties in India, it does not seem to work for explaining Indonesian parties. One of the main reasons

is that both personalistic parties and dynastic parties share the same two features that Chhibber argued for (for the character of a personalist party, see Kostadinova & Levitt, 2014).

In this research, I attempt to build a new hypothesis that could explain the emergence of dynastic parties in Indonesia. It rests on certain premises. Firstly, personalist parties are one pathway to dynastic parties. Secondly, when family members of the leader are heavily involved in the party, a personalist party becomes dynastic prone. Thirdly, one of the most significant barriers to a dynastic succession is factional competition. Fourth, all kinds of parties want to contest in the election, hence, dominating a party is only a matter of a stepping stone to achieve higher office. With all these premises in mind, the hypothesis relates the idea of party types with electoral strategies.

All parties will face succession crisis, be it leadership succession or candidate nomination. A political family that does not have a promising candidate from their own clan only has two options: hibernation and commission. Electoral strategy is the independent variable that will trigger a series of events leading to either the emergence of a dynastic party or preventing party dynasticism. Hibernation means refraining from nominating any candidate to represent them, while commission means nominating a candidate to represent the party and the family. The former will lead to a second-tier factional battle within the party because no opposing faction could be formed. On the other hand, parties that choose a commission must confront the electoral result (intervening variable). If the party wins the election, then a new network of patronage might be formed and the nature of factional conflict is first-tiered. This will make the incumbent party leader adopt a defensive posture to avoid interventions from the opposing faction. Dynastic succession is also prevented when the opposing faction manages to take over the party from the previous faction. If the party loses the election, then the party dynamic will only lead to a second-tiered one, and dynastic succession is easier in this kind of situation.

The fourth chapter traces the development of PD and PDIP, particularly the process by which each congress was conducted. Both parties have experienced both first- and second-tiered factional dynamics. While PDIP coronated Megawati in all five congresses they have held, some want to contest Megawati. PD showcases a more dynamic trajectory. Those competing in the first two congresses were very competitive. In 2013, SBY began the process of personalization until 2020, when he managed to make his son the new leader.

My explanatory variable is the electoral strategy of respective parties as it shaped the nature of the factional dynamic within both parties. This explanatory variable covaries

with the outcome. Dealing with a succession crisis, PD adopted hibernation. This made the party suffer electoral decline, but the Yudhoyono family was relatively immune from an opposing faction. Meanwhile, PDIP commissioned a party cadre to represent the party in the presidential election. Jokowi won the electoral bet and commanded a large sum of state resources at his behest. This made Megawati insecure and canceled any plans for a dynastic succession.

5.2 Constraints

In this section, I discuss two primary points. The first point is the technical constraints that emerge from conducting this kind of research. The second point is the limit of my argument and the validity of my conclusion. Additionally, I also talk about the possibility of using the framework used in this study to analyze dynastic parties in different contexts.

Like any other kind of mini-research, this study is constrained by time and resources. Making appointments with politicians and party cadres takes time, not to mention when they are high-profile individuals. At the same time, my research puzzle and theory demand evidence from the parties' top echelons. There are names that I originally planned to interview, but due to limited access and resources, I could not contact them. More importantly, no credible persons from the Jokowi faction are interviewed. Because of this unintentional omission, the conclusion of this should be read with caution.

In a sense, the limiting factor of this study is a direct consequence of its research design. Hypothetically, the best evidence to prove my hypothesis should come from the family members of and party leaders him/herself (assuming that they are open and willing to provide data for the topic). However, not a single family member from the Soekarno family or the Yudhoyono family was interviewed. I did, however, manage to interview individuals who occupy important positions within the party. Their voices are credible and might represent the thoughts of their respective party leaders. I also managed to interview those who oppose the Yudhoyono family. However, I did not manage to interview someone who opposes Megawati's authority within PDIP.

Does the framework of this research can be used to explain the emergence of dynastic parties in different countries/contexts? The honest answer is "it is possible." In Indonesia, parties gatekeep candidate nominations—presidential or legislative nominations. At the same time, party leaders monopolize important party decisions such as nominations, coalition dealings, and decisions related to legislation. In other words, party leaders hold significant leverage in Indonesian politics. This perhaps explains why some

former Indonesian presidents feel the need to occupy strategic positions within the party after their presidency, namely Abdurrachman Wahid, Megawati Soekarno Poetri, and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. In a nutshell, party leader is a very attractive position.

It is unclear which other countries share the same features as Indonesia regarding the role of political parties in politics. India might be one, but I cannot say the same thing about its neighbors such as Bangladesh and Pakistan. In a matured democracy like the US, the highest position in a political party is not the real prize. Latin American democracies might work differently from Indonesia. Hence, this framework might work only in certain kinds of democracies. A part of the framework might be used in non-democracies; however, this requires further specifications.

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